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# SHORT PLAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

SELECTED AND EDITED BY  
JAMES PLAISTED WEBBER  
AND  
HANSON HART WEBSTER



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## PREFACE

THIS book offers a score of short plays which, in our judgment, are well suited both to reading and to acting by young people. As in our earlier compilation — *One-Act Plays* <sup>1</sup> — our aim has been to assemble plays that are not elsewhere readily obtainable.

“Good plays,” to quote a recent writer,<sup>2</sup> “have a definite cultural influence on young people. They provide wholesome entertainment, stimulate appreciation of the stage, develop a sense of what is and what is not worth while in the theater, and incite greater familiarity with literature.”

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JAMES PLAISTED WEBBER  
HANSON HART WEBSTER

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1923 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

<sup>2</sup> Henrietta Gee, in *The Forecast*.





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# SHORT PLAYS

## THE PRINCE OF STAMBOUL <sup>1</sup>

BY LORD DUNSANY

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SAM WIGGINS  
MRS. WIGGINS  
MARIAN, *their daughter*  
THE DOCTOR  
PRINCE OF STAMBOUL  
TOMMY TIDDLER

SCENE: *A room in the cottage of Mr. and Mrs. Wiggins.*

*It does not matter how the stage is set. As I see it, there is a door in back near right end. Marian's bed is along the back against the wall under the window, the end of the bed touching the left wall, the child's head at that end. As it is on the ground floor, the bed has probably been brought downstairs to give the child more air and light.*

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home" on his flute.

WIGGINS. Yes, yes, and so you shall. But you must get to sleep first.

DOCTOR [*to Mrs. Wiggins*]. There is nothing that I can do,

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except tell you this. She must sleep. You understand, she must. You must get her to sleep *now*; a good long sleep now, and she'll be all right.

MRS. WIGGINS. She keeps crying out so for Tommy Tiddler, and some tune he plays her on his flute, that I'm feared she'll never sleep, sir. Would it be of any use now putting the horse in the cart and sending for Tommy Tiddler? Wiggins would do it willing.

DOCTOR. Where is Tommy Tiddler?

MRS. WIGGINS. He's four miles away over the hills, sir.

DOCTOR. No, he wouldn't be here in under an hour. She must go to sleep now, in the next ten minutes or so. If she stays awake for an hour, you won't get her to sleep at all.

*[He goes to the door.]*

MRS. WIGGINS. Doctor!

DOCTOR. Yes?

MRS. WIGGINS. Will she live, Doctor?

DOCTOR. Yes, if she sleeps at once.

MRS. WIGGINS. Are you sure of that?

DOCTOR. Yes, quite sure. I leave her in your hands.

*[Exits.]*

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home."

MRS. WIGGINS. Yes, yes, but you must go to sleep first, dear. The doctor says —

MARIAN. But I want to hear "Home Sweet Home."

WIGGINS *[rising, to Mrs. Wiggins]*. What are we to do?

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home" on his flute.

MRS. WIGGINS. She has it on her mind, like.

WIGGINS. She'll never sleep.

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler.

*[The whir of a motor is heard.]*

MRS. WIGGINS *[starting]*. Oh, what is that?

WIGGINS *[looking through window]*. It's squire. He's in



that outlandish motor that came to stay with him. He's stopped at Jigger's.

MRS. WIGGINS. Sam! Do you know who that motor belongs to?

WIGGINS. Can't say as I do.

MRS. WIGGINS. It belongs to the Prince of Stamboul!

WIGGINS. Ah, yes. So I heard say.

MRS. WIGGINS. Do you know what they say of the Prince of Stamboul, Sam?

WIGGINS. Can't say as I do.

MRS. WIGGINS. They say he's the greatest musician in the world.

WIGGINS. Ah!

MRS. WIGGINS. He played to the Czar, and the Czar made him the Prince of Stamboul.

WIGGINS. Don't you be thinking of those things, Jane. We must think of Marian now.

MRS. WIGGINS. And so I be thinking of Marian.

MARIAN. Mummy, I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home" on his flute. I say I want to hear "Home Sweet Home."

MRS. WIGGINS. So you shall, child, so you shall, only go to sleep.

MARIAN. I want to hear it now.

MRS. WIGGINS. Sam. They say the Czar wept.

WIGGINS. Well, and if he did. I could weep, too.

MRS. WIGGINS. But it isn't so easy to make a Czar weep, Sam. And I was thinking if he could do that, maybe he would play a little tune to our Marian that would stop her worrying.

WIGGINS. Woman, you're mad!

MRS. WIGGINS. He's there in his car, Sam. Squire's shopping.

WIGGINS. Do you know what those men charge for a little tune?

MRS. WIGGINS. No, Sam.

WIGGINS. A thousand pounds. A London man told me so. And fifteen hundred for an encore. That is when they play it over again, like. They don't take no less, so if you've got the cash —

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home."

MRS. WIGGINS. I'm going to ask him, Sam.

*[Exit Mrs. Wiggins.]*

MRS. WIGGINS *[off]*. Prince of Stamboul!

STAMBOUL *[off, crossly]*. Vat is it? You and your Prince of Stamboul! *[The voices off grow inaudible.]*

*[Wiggins moves to the bed again in great trouble.]*

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home."

*[Reënter Mrs. Wiggins with the Prince of Stamboul.]*

STAMBOUL *[he speaks in the pleasant French manner]*. You pardon me. I was cross when you call me. You pardon me. But when I see you run out of your cottage I thought of my own country. Then you say "Prince of Stamboul" and I am angry, for that is not how they call me.

MRS. WIGGINS. Your Highness, my child is dying, and I did not know what to call you. I just called out your name.

STAMBOUL. No, no, of course, you did not know. How should you? In my own country it is always Lotti, dear Lotti. They run out of their cottages, and say: "Lotti is here." *[He rubs his hands to warm them.]* It is very cold in England, is it not?

MRS. WIGGINS. Oh, yes, sir. My little Marian caught cold playing in the fields and it settled on her lungs, and now —

STAMBOUL. Yes, yes, I will play to her. Is that not what

you want? I will play her a song about the cherry trees. They blossom out in Russia, and all the children dance.

MRS. WIGGINS. She has set her heart on one song. It's "Home Sweet Home." She has set her heart on it, sir, and we can't get her to go to sleep and get well. She's fretting for that song.

STAMBOUL. Ah, it is one of your English songs. I know it not well.

MRS. WIGGINS. You don't know it, sir?

STAMBOUL. Ah, well enough, well enough. When my violin plays, they do not care about the tune. If they are sick, they grow well. If they are well, they dance. If they are sad — well, who knows — sometimes they weep, sometimes they grow young again, sometimes — It is all in my violin.

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home" on his flute.

MRS. WIGGINS. You shall hear it, you shall hear it. You will play "Home Sweet Home," won't you, sir?

STAMBOUL. Yes, little child, I shall play it to you. But perhaps I play not so well as your Tommy Tiddler.

*[He looks around for a chair.]*

MRS. WIGGINS. I have only a wooden chair to offer you, sir, not what you're accustomed to.

STAMBOUL. No, it is with rushes we make chairs in my country. They are more soft. Sometimes they carve on the back some little picture. You lean back in them and think —

MARIAN. I want to hear "Home Sweet Home."

STAMBOUL. I play. When I play, you shall hear the daisies growing in Russia, not the sound of their growing, for that is silent like all holy things. It is their song that you shall hear. Their joy in the sun as they come up, their gladness and their greeting to the gnats. You

shall hear what they sing as they come up round my home in Russia, where my mother is. But we begin.

[*He plays "Home Sweet Home" on his violin.*]

WIGGINS. I'm sure that's very clever, Your Highness, if one was educated 'ow to understand it. I'm sure we're very much obliged to Your Highness.

MRS. WIGGINS. You must have been a peasant boy like us, sir. And they still call you "dear Lotti"?

STAMBOUL. Yes, in Russia.

MARIAN. That is not the way Tommy Tiddler plays it.

MRS. WIGGINS. Hush, child, you mustn't say that.

STAMBOUL. Ah, you English child.

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler.

MRS. WIGGINS. You must excuse her, sir. She is ill and does not understand.

STAMBOUL. Yes, yes, she caught your English cold, and does not understand. But where is your Tommy Tiddler?

MRS. WIGGINS. He is over the hills, sir, four miles away watching sheep, over at Lingfield cross-roads.

STAMBOUL. Ah, I send you your Tommy Tiddler. [*Exit.*]

MRS. WIGGINS. Sam! He's gone to fetch Tommy Tiddler.

WIGGINS. He'll never be here in time.

MRS. WIGGINS. He might. Those motor-cars do go dreadfully quick. Go to sleep now, dearie, do.

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home."

MRS. WIGGINS. Oh, whatever shall we do?

[*A loud whiz is heard, growing fainter and fainter. Enter the Prince of Stamboul with his watch in his hand.*]

STAMBOUL. My motor go for your Tommy Tiddler.

MRS. WIGGINS. Oh, it's very kind, sir, very kind, indeed. But I fear she won't sleep now. It will take the motor nearly half an hour to get all that way and back, and she'll be fretting herself all that time, poor dear.



WIGGINS. Yes, it will take all that; we had a motor in these parts last election. I had a ride in it and I voted for Shigg.

STAMBOUL [*looking at his watch*]. One minute.

MRS. WIGGINS. What do you say, sir?

STAMBOUL. My Phillippe has been gone one minute.

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home."

STAMBOUL. Four miles is eight miles there and back. Twelve eights are ninety-six. If Phillippe does ninety-six miles an hour, he get back in five minutes.

MRS. WIGGINS. Oh, sir!

STAMBOUL. But he not do ninety-six miles an hour. When he go quick, he do a hundred miles an hour.

MRS. WIGGINS. Oh, sir!

STAMBOUL. But to-day I tell Phillippe to go *vairy* quick — but not *too* quick. So he be back very soon now, if he gets your Tommy Tiddler in quickly.

MRS. WIGGINS. Oh, Tommy Tiddler will come running down when he sees a motor, sir, quick he will! He always runs to shy his stone at a motor.

WIGGINS. A hundred miles an hour!

STAMBOUL. When he only go quick.

WIGGINS. Well, well, well!

STAMBOUL. Two minutes.

WIGGINS. But don't the police say anything to you like, sir?

STAMBOUL. Ah, the police. They ask me for why I go so quick.

MRS. WIGGINS. Whatever do you say, sir?

STAMBOUL. Ah, when I am in my own country, I say, "I am Lotti."

MRS. WIGGINS. But when you are abroad, sir?

STAMBOUL. Ah, when I am abroad. When I am in Italy, in France, in Spain, and in America, I say also, "I am Lotti."

MRS. WIGGINS. But when you are in England, sir?

STAMBOUL. Ah, when I am in England? When I am in England I pay, a fine, what is it? A hundred pounds, what is that? I go over to Paris and play my violin and back come my hundred pounds, and he bring his friends.

WIGGINS. Well, well!

MARIAN. I want to hear Tommy Tiddler play "Home Sweet Home."

STAMBOUL. Three minutes.

MRS. WIGGINS. Hark, hush, dearie, and so you shall.

MARIAN. Why doesn't he come and play?

MRS. WIGGINS. The kind gentleman has sent for him in his motor-car. He'll be here in half an hour.

MARIAN. Why doesn't he come now?

MRS. WIGGINS [*pillow business*]. He'll come, dearie, he'll come. Only go to sleep.

MARIAN. I can't sleep, Mummy. Tommy Tiddler's pretty tune is running in my head, and I want to hear it. I can't sleep.

MRS. WIGGINS. You shall hear it, only go to sleep.

MARIAN. But I can't, Mummy. The tune —

MRS. WIGGINS. Will it be very long before he's here, sir?

STAMBOUL [*looking at watch, not answering her*]. Four minutes.

[*A whir is heard, growing louder and louder, and much shouting and perhaps a scream or two.*]

MRS. WIGGINS. Why, sir, that be your motor!

STAMBOUL. Oh, the bad Phillippe! He go too quick. The pigs, the chickens, all dead. Oh, the bad Phillippe.

[*Enter the bucolic Tommy Tiddler, aged about fourteen. Face red and circular. Eyes vacant. He comes in shyly.*]

MRS. WIGGINS. Come here, my Tommy Tiddler, this kind gentleman —

MARIAN. Tommy Tiddler, play "Home Sweet Home" on your flute.

TOMMY TIDDLER. Arl 'av a try, Marian.

*[He pulls a cheap flute out of his pocket, with a few odd bits of string, and plays. Stamboul, putting his hands to his ears and slightly stamping, resembles Irving's Mephistopheles, when he hears the church bells in Faust! Tommy Tiddler's execution is bad.]*

MARIAN. Thank you, Tommy Tiddler.

MRS. WIGGINS. You'll go to sleep like a good girl now, won't you, dearie?

MARIAN. Wha—at, Mummy?

MRS. WIGGINS. You'll — come on, Sam.

*[They all move nearer the door. Exit Tommy Tiddler.]*

MRS. WIGGINS. I've an odd fancy come over me, sir.

Would you think it very strange, indeed, if I was to kiss your hand? It's an odd idea to come into my head. I don't know what folks would say, sir, but there it is.

WIGGINS. Jane! Jane! Whatever will the gentleman think? *[Exit Wiggins.]*

*[She takes his left hand in the doorway.]*

STAMBOUL *[pulling it away]*. No, no, not that one. They never kiss that one. Oh, you English! This is the hand that they kiss.

*[He holds out his right hand royally with the bow of the violin pointing downwards. She kisses his hand. Exeunt. The child sleeps.]*

CURTAIN

# THE TOY SHOP <sup>1</sup>

BY PERCIVAL WILDE

## THE CHARACTERS

BOBBY

BETSY

THE MASKED DOLL

THE PIERROT DOLL

THE WOODEN SOLDIER

THE FRENCH DOLL

THE SAILOR DOLL

THE RAG DOLL

THE RUBBER DOG

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX

THE DRUM

DAD

MOTHER

THE SHOPKEEPER

THE POLICEMAN

*We are in the toy-shop on Christmas eve. It is a quarter of twelve at night: the big grandfather's clock at the right says so. The clerks and the customers are gone; the shop is closed; the door at the rear is locked, and outside, in the street, snow is falling.*

*Most of the lights have been put out long ago; even the lights in the show-windows, on either side of the door, are*

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out; just one big light, high up near the ceiling, sways from side to side a little, and casts queer shadows.

The shop is bare. Nearly all of the toys have been sold. A week ago — even two days ago — counters and shelves were full to overflowing. Now bins and boxes are empty, and the light shows nothing but yawning blacknesses in the background, for the few toys and games that are left cannot begin to fill the room that there is for them.

Right in the center of the shop is the bargain-counter. We know it is the bargain-counter because a big sign at one end of it says so, and at the other end of it a second sign announces **EVERYTHING HERE REDUCED**. And on this counter there is a lonely little group: a masked doll, sweet and simple and alluring, for all the mystery that the wisp of a mask lends her; a Pierrot doll, dressed as Pierrot has been dressed from time immemorial; a wooden soldier, very imposing, with a gun on his shoulder and a furry busby on his head (though his uniform looks suspiciously like that of a policeman); a French doll, very blond and fashionable and haughty; a sailor doll, natty in a cap and blouse and bell-bottomed trousers; a rag doll, with shoe-button eyes and woolly hair; and a rubber dog, nice and bulgy and covered with impossible spots. At one side is a large box, gayly striped in red and yellow, and at the other side a snare-drum.

Strictly speaking, eight or ten toys — for there are that many — ought hardly be lonely. But they are so very small, and the counter is so very large, and the shop is so very empty, and, above all, it is Christmas Eve; and, being dolls, they are accustomed to fairly large families, say a few thousand brothers and sisters and four or five million cousins, not to mention more distant relatives, who are positively numerous. Compared with that, eight or ten do not amount to much.

*They are the left-overs; the toys that weren't sold. Needless to say, they feel very badly about it. They are quite as attractive as the toys that did get sold, more attractive than many of them. Indeed, one or two of them are so attractive that they were kept in the show-window until this very morning. But here they are, miserably unhappy, and wishing that on Christmas eve they might be somewhere else; some place where it is warm and bright and happy, and where they can hear the laughter of children.*

*From one side a little boy wanders in. He is not a toy; he is real. He is a well-dressed little boy, and his name is Bobby. He is all alone in the empty shop, and we wonder why he is there so late at night. He goes toward the bargain-counter, and suddenly a little girl pops out from under it. She is not nearly so well dressed and her name is Betsy.*

BOBBY. Hello!

BETSY. Hello!

BOBBY. What are you doing here?

BETSY. What are *you* doing here?

BOBBY. What are *YOU* doing here?

BETSY. What are *you* doing here?

BOBBY. That's not fair. I asked you first.

BETSY [*deliberately*]. Well, I'm losted.

BOBBY. Lost?

BETSY [*correcting him*]. Lost-ed. [*Proudly.*] I've been losted ever since the store closed.

BOBBY. That's nothing. I've been lost — losted — ever so much longer!

BETSY [*admiringly*]. Gee!

BOBBY. I wonder if Dad got home safely. You know, I'm worried about him. Why, he's afraid to cross the street all by himself; makes me take his hand every time we

come to a crossing. He's awfully old: over thirty. Poor Dad!

BETSY. Never you mind. He'll go to a policeman, and he'll take care of him.

BOBBY. Yes, I guess so. [*He sighs.*] Gee, that's a load off my mind! [*He pauses.*] How'd you lose your dad?

BETSY. It wasn't my dad. I haven't got any dad.

BOBBY. No?

BETSY. It was my mother. And I didn't lose her. I came here all by myself.

BOBBY [*impressed*]. All by yourself?

BETSY. We live just around the corner; up five flights of stairs.

BOBBY [*decisively*]. Then you're not lost. How can you be lost if you know where you live?

BETSY. But I can't go home, can I? I came here, and they locked the door.

BOBBY [*positively*]. You're not lost-ed.

BETSY. Are *you* losted?

BOBBY. Yes!

BETSY. All right, Mr. Smarty, I'm the same place you are, so I'm losted too! So there!

BOBBY [*who is a very logical little person*]. Well, if you didn't want to get lost-ed, why did you come here?

BETSY. I came here — [*She interrupts herself.*] You won't tell?

BOBBY. No.

BETSY. Cross your heart?

BOBBY. Hope to die.

BETSY. I came here — [*with shyness*] — to kiss *her* good-bye.

BOBBY. Her?

BETSY [*silently indicates the Masked Doll*].

BOBBY. Oh! [*He pauses.*] Well, go right ahead. Don't mind me.

BETSY [*shaking her head*]. Now that I'm here I don't want to kiss her good-bye. I don't want to say good-bye to her at all! [*She stops; continues hesitantly.*] I saw her the first time ever so long ago. She was in the window, and there were lots of other dolls with her. But they weren't as beautiful as she was; not one of them. I looked at her, and — and she smiled at me.

BOBBY. Go on!

BETSY. She did! She did! I told Mother about her, and Mother smiled and said, "Wait and see! Maybe you'll find her in your Christmas stocking!"

BOBBY [*interrupting*]. Say, you don't believe in Santa Claus, do you?

BETSY. 'Course I do!

BOBBY. Huh! [*He pauses.*] Go on!

BETSY. Well, Mother said maybe I'd find her in my Christmas stocking; and every day I've been coming here to see if she was still in the window.

BOBBY. Golly! All by yourself?

BETSY [*nodding*]. Just me. I didn't tell Mother about *that*!

BOBBY. And she didn't catch on?

BETSY. Not Mother. All I had to do was wait, and tiptoe out after they brought me back from school. Mother goes out to work every day.

BOBBY. So does my dad!

BETSY. My mother works harder! I know it! I just know it! When she comes home at night she cries, she's so tired.

BOBBY. Dad doesn't cry. Never.

BETSY. Just wait and see! Everybody cries — sometime. [*She pauses again.*] I came here every day to look at my dolly; and Christmas getting closer and closer; and every day she was in the window, and looking at me just as if she wanted to be in my arms. First Mother said, "Maybe"; and then a little later she said, "Wait and

we'll see" — that's what she says when everything's going to come out all right; and then, only this very morning, Mother said, "Betsy, would you be dreadfully disappointed if you didn't get the dolly?" and I knew that meant that everything was all wrong.

BOBBY. Gee, that's hard luck!

BETSY. So I said, "It doesn't matter, Mother; I didn't care about her very much." But I did, oh, I did! Only I didn't want Mother to see me crying. So I came here, just for a last look, and she wasn't in the window any more, and I was afraid she was gone. I was afraid somebody had bought her — but I wanted somebody to buy her if I couldn't have her. And then I found her in here on the table, and I wanted to say good-bye to her, and whisper in her ear that I hoped she'd make some other little girl ever so happy, and kiss her — just once. But I couldn't do it with so many people around, so I hid — and I think I fell asleep — and they closed up the store while I was hidden.

BOBBY [*surveying the Masked Doll critically*]. She isn't so much to look at.

BETSY. Oh, how can you say that? She's just sweet!

BOBBY [*indicating the Wooden Soldier*]. I'd rather have this one.

BETSY [*crushingly*]. You would.

BOBBY [*magnanimously*]. But if you'd told me you wanted her I'd have gotten her for you.

BETSY. You?

BOBBY. I'd have told my dad, and he'd have done it sure as shooting. He doesn't say, "Maybe," or "Wait and see." He's not like that! He just says, "Righto, old fellow," and there you are!

BETSY [*sighing*]. It must be nice to have a father like that.

BOBBY. What's *your* father like?

BETSY. I don't know; I don't remember him. Mother



doesn't talk about him much. It's years and years since she's seen him.

BOBBY [*impressed*]. Years and years?

BETSY. Oh, ever so many! Sometimes she does talk about him, and then I don't understand what she says; and mostly, when she talks about him, she cries.

[*Accidentally — or perhaps on purpose — Bobby touches something on the counter. There is a whir, and a round little head, topping a grotesque little body, leaps a foot into the air. Betsy screams.*]

BOBBY. It's only an old Jack-in-the-Box. See! [*He closes it up and lets it fly again.*] He can't hurt you. [*He notices the signs on the counter, and reads aloud.*] "Bargain Coun-ter." "Ev-ery-thing Here Re-duced." That's what they think of your old doll. Nobody wants her.

BETSY [*sighing*]. That's what Mother says about us; nobody wants us.

BOBBY. Aw, cheer up! It's Christmas Eve!

BETSY [*almost weeping*]. I know it, oh, I know it! And it's going to be the same as any other day.

BOBBY. No, it isn't. You feel it here. [*He places his hand on his heart.*] Don't you feel it?

BETSY. Not much.

BOBBY. Try again. Close your eyes, and say to yourself, "Christmas!" Just "Christmas!" Now!

BETSY [*closing her eyes*]. Christmas! Christmas!

BOBBY [*anxiously*]. Well?

BETSY. I think I feel it — a little.

BOBBY. Sort of warm feeling — with tickles on it?

BETSY. Um — hum.

BOBBY [*with approval*]. That's more like it! My dad says it's just a matter of getting a grip on yourself.

BETSY [*yawns*]. I'm tired.

BOBBY. So'm I. Let's go to sleep.

BETSY. What'll Mother say when I don't come home?

BOBBY. What can she say? You can't get out of here.

Cheer up; you're with me.

BETSY [*after a shy pause*]. I can't go to sleep without saying my prayers. May I say them at your lap?

[*Bobby nods timidly. Betsy kneels.*]

Now I lay me down to sleep;  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

[*She adds very rapidly, and in a single breath:*] God bless Father, Mother, Gran'pa, Gran'ma, Betsy, Jennie, Millie, teacher, my dear dolly, 'n' — [*She interrupts herself suddenly.*] What's your name?

BOBBY. Bobby.

BETSY. 'N' Bobby 'n' everybody. Amen. [*She sits with her back against the counter.*] Now I'm going to sleep.

BOBBY [*looks at her a minute; then he takes off his coat and rolls it into a pillow. He places it behind her back.*]. Here.

BETSY. Thank you, Bobby.

BOBBY [*settling himself near her*]. Are you comfy?

BETSY [*drowsily*]. Fine. [*A pause.*] Maybe when I'm asleep I'll dream about my dolly — dream that she belongs to me, and that she's never, never going away. Maybe I'll dream that Mother has everything she wants. Maybe I'll dream that everything's going to be all right — all right!

BOBBY. Of course everything's all right. It's got to be all right; it's Christmas Eve. [*After a long pause.*] I'm getting awful sleepy.

BETSY. So'm I. [*Another pause.*]

BOBBY. I'm asleep now. Say, I'm asleep.

[*Betsy does not answer.*]

[*The grandfather's clock begins to chime the hour of*

*midnight. The lights begin to die down. The clock-chimes continue; cease to be clock-chimes; become wonderful harmonies.*

*It is quite dark.*

*Slowly a curious light begins to glow at the front edge of the bargain-counter, a light as if the bargain-counter were a miniature stage. It shines upon the faces of the toys that weren't sold; shines upon them as if they were actors in a play. Bobby and Betsy sleep on.*

*Suddenly we hear a new voice: a sharp, commanding voice. We know where it comes from, even though we can see that the determined little mouth is tightly shut.]*

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. They're asleep! They're asleep! They're asleep!

THE MASKED DOLL [*we just know that this must be the speaker*].  
Hush! You'll wake them!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. Not I! Don't you see? She's dreaming about us. [*Betsy moves in her sleep.*] All ready? Company — 'tention! Right shoulder — arms! [*And amazing to say, though none of the dolls has moved, there is the rattle of a gun being shouldered.*] Forward — march! [*Abruptly the lights go out. A drumming begins: Thrump! — Thrump! — Thrump! Thrump! Thrump! — Thrump! — Thrump! — Thrump! Thrump! Thrump! There is the shuffle of marching feet. Then, in the dark.*] Company — halt! [*The shuffle stops.*] 'Tention!

[*The lights flash on. The Wooden Soldier grounds his gun with a crash. The toys have come to life. It is the bargain-counter, but most wonderfully changed. The toys are ever so much larger; the counter is the full width of the stage; and the shop, Bobby, and Betsy have disappeared behind a curtain of velvety blackness. Yet it must be the*

*bargain-counter, for at one end an enormous sign, ten feet tall at least, tells us just that, while at the other end an even bigger sign announces "EVERY-THING HERE REDUCED."*

*Of course the signs we saw at first were much smaller than that, and the counter was much smaller, and the dolls themselves were very much smaller. But we are suddenly looking at everything through a powerful magnifying-glass, and if the toys seem to move, and talk, and if their expressions seem to change, we must remember that if we had looked more closely we might have seen them doing it before. They are the same dolls that we have seen, but they are life-size now — and alive. The Wooden Soldier has a real gun, and the French Doll speaks French, and the Pierrot has grown ever so much better-looking, and the Rubber Dog barks (a sort of rubbery bark), and the Jack is still in his box, which has grown ten times bigger. Only the Drum has changed still more; at one end of his round body he has sprouted a head; two legs stick out at the other end, and two arms, coming out at the sides, ply a pair of drumsticks.]*

THE FRENCH DOLL. *C'est la veille de Noël!*

THE SAILOR DOLL [*who is a slangy little person*]. What's she talking about?

THE PIERROT. She says it's Christmas Eve.

THE SAILOR DOLL [*wearily*]. Don't I know it?

THE OTHERS [*with varying degrees of sadness*]. We all know it. We all know it.

THE RUBBER DOG. I was made to bounce around in the bathtub; to bounce around over a little fat tummy. I was made to belong to a little master, and to be bathed once a day. Instead of that I'm here — on dry land! It's awful — Woof!

THE SAILOR DOLL [*caressing the Rubber Dog sympathetically*].

Dry land! Me on dry land! What d'ye think o' that? There's a storm at sea to-night! Snow! And wind! And waves! [*She pauses sadly.*] They had me in a little boat, there [*she points*] on one of the shelves. The little boat sailed away — and left me behind!

[*The Rubber Dog licks her hand.*]

THE RAG DOLL. They say there's always room for me at the top — of the stocking. I was one of a family of twelve thousand. We were so happy together — just the twelve thousand of us. Now they've sold all my sisters, and I'm the only one left!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. In the factory where I was born I watched them making cannon-balls; one cannon-ball for every wooden soldier. All my life I've been waiting for one of those cannon-balls to come and knock me down. They sold all the cannon-balls, but they didn't sell me.

THE PIERROT. Pierrot and Pierrette! Pierrette has gone to sit on a mantelpiece on Christmas Day, and Pierrot, poor Pierrot, is left alone! [*He starts as the Masked Doll passes him.*] You remind me of Pierrette.

THE MASKED DOLL. But I am not Pierrette. [*She sighs.*] Through the glass front of the show-window I saw a little girl one day. Our eyes met. She wanted me. I wanted her. I thought I was going to live with her; I felt sure I was going to live with her. And now — now — it's Christmas Eve — [*She breaks down.*]

THE SAILOR DOLL [*in a tone of awe*]. Gee, did they have you in the show-window?

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. Didn't you see her there? Right in front?

THE SAILOR DOLL [*impressed*]. Now, what do you think of that?

THE FRENCH DOLL [*jealous*]. Zey would have put me in ze show-window, but ze sunlight, she is not good for my —

my — what you call him? — [*indicating her face*] — my complication.

THE RUBBER DOG. Complication? You mean complexion! Woof!

THE FRENCH DOLL. What I mean he is no matter to you; I snub you!

THE SAILOR DOLL. Snub him? It can't be done; he bounces!

THE FRENCH DOLL. Bah!

THE MASKED DOLL. Don't let's fight. It's bad enough to be here on Christmas Eve without making it worse by quarreling with each other! Christmas Eve!

THE OTHERS [*in various tones of regret*]. Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve!

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX [*popping up suddenly, as the Drum begins beating*]. Cheer up, everybody! Even if you weren't sold, I'm here to amuse you!

THE DRUM [*drumming loudly*]. And I'm here to help him!  
[*The Jack-in-the-Box bows grotesquely and disappears.*]

THE FRENCH DOLL. And I am here, I myself, on ze bargain-counter so zat ze customers zey look at you, ze ozzers.

THE RUBBER DOG. Gee! She doesn't think much of herself! Woof!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER [*indicating the Masked Doll*]. Take a lesson from her! She was in the show-window, and she doesn't put on any airs about it! She's just one of us!

THE MASKED DOLL. Yes, I'm just one of you. And all of us, we're just little people that nobody wants.

THE PIERROT. You remind me of Pierrette — very much of Pierrette.

THE MASKED DOLL. But I am not Pierrette.

THE PIERROT. Who knows? Who knows? Do you remember — it was years ago — how happy we were? You and I?



THE MASKED DOLL [*looking into his eyes with a start of recognition*]. You!

THE PIERROT. Pierrette!

THE MASKED DOLL [*turning away*]. I used to be happy; yes, once I was happy.

THE PIERROT. We had two children. A little boy —

THE MASKED DOLL. And a little girl.

THE PIERROT. And then —

THE MASKED DOLL. You were cruel to me; ah, you were cruel to me!

THE PIERROT. But I loved you! Always I loved you!

THE MASKED DOLL [*passionately*]. I couldn't stand it any longer! I couldn't stand it another minute! I took my little girl in my arms! I ran away! I left you!

THE PIERROT [*opening his arms sadly*]. Pierrette! Ah, Pierrette!

THE MASKED DOLL [*pushing him away*]. I am not Pierrette!

THE PIERROT. You are Pierrette!

THE MASKED DOLL. Perhaps I *was* Pierrette; perhaps I might have been Pierrette. But now —

THE PIERROT. Now?

THE MASKED DOLL. I am only somebody that nobody wants.

THE DOLLS [*sadly*]. All of us, all of us; only somebodies that nobody wants.

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX [*popping up; the Drum beats a furious tattoo*]. Cheer up! Cheer up, everybody! [*He vanishes.*]

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. He isn't very sociable, is he? Keeps to himself. Now, I wouldn't like to live in a box —

THE RAG DOLL. With the lid fastened tight.

THE RUBBER DOG. And dark! Dark! Woof!

THE FRENCH DOLL. He is what you call ze areestocrat! I loaf him! He is so exclusive!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. Look out! Look out that he doesn't break your heart!

THE MASKED DOLL [*with a look at the Pierrot*]. As my heart was broken!

THE PIERROT. Is it too late? Too late to begin over? Is it ever too late? [*She does not answer.*] How many nights I have dreamed of you! How many days you have been in my thoughts! Do you know — ah, I wonder if you know how long it has been?

THE MASKED DOLL. Before I became somebody nobody wants?

THE PIERROT. How can you be so cruel? I have always wanted you. Perhaps — years ago — I didn't know it as I know it now. Pierrette, I have learned so much!

THE MASKED DOLL. And I too, Pierrot!

[*The lights dim, and flash on again suddenly.*]

THE RAG DOLL [*frightened*]. What was that?

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. She stirred in her sleep; the little girl who is dreaming about us.

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX [*appearing and disappearing*]. Cheer up! Cheer up, everybody!

[*The Drum beats as before.*]

THE SAILOR DOLL. Gee, it's easy to say it, isn't it?

THE RUBBER DOG. But it isn't so easy to do it. Woof!

THE FRENCH DOLL [*almost weeping*]. La veille de Noël!

THE SAILOR DOLL. If my father and mother knew that I was the only one who wasn't sold, they'd put me in an open boat without oars or sails, and send me to Davy Jones's locker! Gee, I wish they would!

THE RAG DOLL. If my twelve thousand sisters knew that I was here to-night — Christmas Eve — [*she gasps*] — they'd open me and let my stuffings run out!

THE RUBBER DOG. That's where I've got an advantage! I haven't got any stuffings! Woof!

THE SAILOR DOLL. No, old bag of wind!

THE FRENCH DOLL [*surveying the sign sadly*]. "Bargain-counter!" Me — on ze bargain-counter! Never before has zat happen to any of my family!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. The Old Guard dies, but does not surrender! [*He grounds his musket defiantly.*] I stick to my post!

THE RAG DOLL [*sadly*]. It seems to me that's what we're all doing; sticking to our posts.

THE RUBBER DOG. Not that we want to! Oh, no! I'd give the biggest spot on my nose to be somewhere else! Woof!

THE SAILOR DOLL [*petting him*]. That goes double, old fellow. [*The Rubber Dog licks his hand.*]

THE FRENCH DOLL [*who has crossed to the other end of the counter, and reads the second sign*]. "Everything Here Reduced!" Me — reduced! [*She shakes her fist at the sign.*] Ah, I could keel you!

THE PIERROT [*approaching the Masked Doll*]. We could begin over.

THE MASKED DOLL. Never!

THE PIERROT. You could come back to me.

THE MASKED DOLL. Never!

THE PIERROT. You could forget.

THE MASKED DOLL. Never! Never! What I have been through in these years! What I have suffered, my child and I! Perhaps *you* can forget; you have nothing to forget. You don't have to work and work and work, and then climb five flights of stairs at the end of a hard day! You don't have to scrimp and stint and save, hoping to buy your child a gift for Christmas; hoping against hope, and then having to ask her if she would be terribly disappointed if she didn't get it! How I had my heart set on it! How I looked forward to the day when I would place it in her arms! And then, to know that that day would never come!

THE PIERROT. Poor Pierrette!

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX [*appearing and disappearing, as the Drum beats*]. Cheer up! Cheer up, everybody!

THE MASKED DOLL [*looking about suddenly*]. Where's my child? [*She turns to the Pierrot.*] Have you seen my child?

THE PIERROT. No.

THE MASKED DOLL [*hurrying to the French Doll*]. Madam, have you seen my child? A little girl with blue eyes and golden hair?

THE FRENCH DOLL. Mais non, Madame.

THE MASKED DOLL [*addressing the Rag Doll, terribly excited*].

Perhaps you have seen her? You must have seen her!

THE RAG DOLL. I'm so sorry. She didn't come this way.

THE MASKED DOLL. She was home when I went out this morning. She was brought back from school all right; the other children told me so. She played with them in the afternoon. But when I came home in the evening she was gone! Do you hear me? She was gone! [*She is desperate. The Sailor Doll passes by. She clutches at his sleeve.*] You have seen her? You know where she is?

THE SAILOR DOLL. No, Ma'am.

THE MASKED DOLL. A little girl; blue eyes, golden hair! My little girl! [*She weeps.*]

THE SAILOR DOLL [*touched*]. I'll look for her, Ma'am. I'll let you know if I see her.

THE MASKED DOLL. Thank you! Oh, thank you! [*She catches sight of the Wooden Soldier.*] Oh, Officer, Officer!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER [*hurrying to her*]. Yes'm?

THE MASKED DOLL [*desperately*]. I've lost my little girl! Help me! Won't you help me?

THE WOODEN SOLDIER [*producing a note-book*]. What's she like, Ma'am?

THE MASKED DOLL. Six years old; going on seven. Blue eyes, golden hair. Tell me that you've seen her! She must have passed this way!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER [*shaking his head*]. I'm sorry, Ma'am.

THE MASKED DOLL [*heartrendingly*]. You haven't seen her?

Don't tell me you haven't seen her!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. She hasn't passed on my beat.

THE MASKED DOLL [*hysterically*]. Maybe she's been hurt!

Maybe she's been run over and killed!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER [*kindly*]. If she'd been hurt I'd have heard of it, Ma'am.

THE MASKED DOLL. She's so little! And I've never let her cross the street alone! [*She turns pathetically to the bystanders.*] Can't you help me? Can't any of you help me?

THE DOLLS [*all speaking at once*]. She's lost her child! The poor woman! Oh, the poor woman!

THE MASKED DOLL [*frantic*]. Can't you do something? For Heaven's sake, do something!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER. Ma'am, I'll tell you what we'll do; we'll send out a general alarm!

THE OTHERS. A general alarm! Yes! A general alarm! A general alarm!

THE WOODEN SOLDIER [*turning to the Drum commandingly*]. Send out the general alarm!

[*The Drum beats furiously, madly; unseen bells begin to ring out wildly; the Rubber Dog adds to the clamor by barking at the top of his lungs.*]

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX [*popping up*]. Cheer up! Cheer up, everybody!

[*The lights die down. The last we see of the little group, the Wooden Soldier, erect, commanding, in the center, is supporting the tottering figure of the Masked Doll. The other characters are sympathetically gathered about them — all except Pierrot, who buries his face in his hands at the extreme end of the bargain-counter.*]

*It is quite dark. The barking of the Rubber Dog dies away. The beating of the Drum, gradually*

*subdued, stops and starts — and stops and starts again. The ringing of the bells becomes calmer. Chimes are heard, chimes curiously resembling those of a grandfather's clock. Very slowly the lights rise again. We are back in the toy-shop. The toys are on the bargain-counter, as we first saw them. Bobby and Betsy are sound asleep in front of it.*

*The grandfather's clock, finishing its chimes, slowly and majestically strikes the hour of midnight. We hear a sound. At first we think it is still the beating of the Drum. Then we see that some one in the dimly lighted street is rattling the knob of the door at the rear. We can distinguish two dark figures. Bobby starts up out of his sleep.]*

A MAN AT THE DOOR. Wait a minute! Wait till I find the key!

ANOTHER. Can't you hurry? For Heaven's sake, hurry!

THE MAN AT THE DOOR. I've got it!

*[The door flies open. Two men, Dad (who looks strangely like the Pierrot) and the Shopkeeper, plunge into the deserted store.]*

DAD *[shouting]*. Bobby! Bobby! Are you here?

BOBBY *[very matter-of-fact]*. 'Course I'm here, Dad.

DAD *[rushes to him and seizes him in his arms]*. Bobby! Bobby!

BOBBY. So you're all right, Dad? Gee, I'm glad! You certainly had me worried. *[Suddenly.]* Hey, don't kiss me, Dad! I'm too old for that!

*[Two other figures have appeared at the door. They are Mother and a Policeman.]*

THE POLICEMAN *[who looks most unaccountably like the Wooden Soldier]*. The door's wide open, Ma'am.

MOTHER. I'm afraid! Oh, I'm afraid!

THE POLICEMAN *[leading the way]*. Come right in. Nobody'll hurt you.



MOTHER [*follows him in. She is a sweet-faced little woman in a long cape. The doll whom Pierrot called Pierrette, you remember, wore a mask; and Mother looks very much as you would expect Pierrette to look without the mask. She looks at Dad and the Shopkeeper, who are perfectly motionless; looks at them, and through them; does not appear to see them. And Dad, seeing her, takes off his hat, and stands gazing at her as if he could not believe his eyes, gazing at her as if his eyes were drinking her in. But Mother is thinking of only one thing; her lips whisper just one name. Silently, peering anxiously to right and left, she comes toward us. She catches sight of the Masked Doll, and stops abruptly. If Betsy is here, she must be very near here. And then she sees her — She says nothing; her heart is too full. Slowly, noiselessly, she crosses to the side of the sleeping child and kneels in prayer. In the background the Policeman and the Shopkeeper take off their hats. And from some not distant church comes the sound of a singing choir. Presently Mother rises with the sleeping child in her arms; comes face to face with Dad. She starts. Then she whispers a name*]. Edmund!

DAD [*bows his head. If we looked closely we would see tears in his eyes. It was Betsy, you remember, who explained that everybody cries — sometimes. Then he comes very close to Mother, and he, too, whispers*]. Margaret, my wife! [*She does not answer. Dad's face lights with a great joy.*] After five years — on Christmas Eve — God has brought us together! [*His arm steals around her shoulders.*] Come!

[*Mother hesitates. Then from the lips of the sleeping child floats a sound.*]

BETSY. Come, Pierrette!

DAD [*marveling*]. Sweetheart, what I used to call you — five years ago!

[*Mother bows her head gently. We know it means*

*"Yes." Again Dad's arm steals around her shoulders. Slowly they move toward the door. As they pass the bargain-counter Mother stops. She indicates a doll.]*

THE SHOPKEEPER [*hurrying up*]. Which one?

DAD [*giving him a bank-note*]. All of them.

THE SHOPKEEPER [*bowing and scraping*]. Yes, sir; yes, sir.

I'll send them first thing in the morning.

MOTHER [*taking the Masked Doll*]. But this one we will take with us!

*[Bobby, open-mouthed, wondering in the shadows, does not know what to make of it all. Nor does he know what to make of it as Dad peels off another bank-note and gives it to the silent Policeman. But his father's great protecting arm falls gently upon the little boy's shoulders, and the four — and Pierrette — go out of the door together.]*

*Mother, walking as in a dream, has not yet seen Bobby; but for that there will be time to-morrow, and to-morrow, and in the years that shall come thereafter. The Policeman and the Shopkeeper are left alone. They grin at each other. Then the Shopkeeper (by the way, he is a fat little man) ambles over to the bargain-counter, produces a huge box, and, still grinning from ear to ear, begins to pack the toys in it. The Policeman — he is a very dignified policeman — saunters over to watch him. The Shopkeeper looks up, smiles, pushes a box on the counter toward the Policeman, and presses a spring. The Jack-in-the-Box pops up. The Policeman's grin becomes a wide-open smile.]*

THE POLICEMAN. Merry Christmas!

THE SHOPKEEPER [*bowing*]. And a very Merry Christmas to you!

CURTAIN

THE STOLEN PRINCE <sup>1</sup>  
A PLAYLET DONE IN THE CHINESE FASHION  
By DAN TOTTERO

CHARACTERS

LONG FO, *the little son of the royal cook*

WING LEE, *his little sister*

THE ROYAL NURSE

HI TEE, *a poor but honest fisherman*

LI MO, *his wife*

JOY, *the little prince who was stolen*

LEE MEE, *the duck*

TWO SOLDIERS OF THE ROYAL COURT

THE EXECUTIONER

THE CHORUS

THE PROPERTY MAN

THE ORCHESTRA

*There is no stage setting except for a back-drop of curtains and two black chairs, center. A lacquered box for the property man stands in the upper left corner. On the extreme right, separated from the players by a railing, is the orchestra composed of three or more children dressed as Chinamen. They have no leader and they play without notes. Any instruments may be used but there must be a gong. The music must be shrill and squeaky and, to our ears, discordant. Combs, covered with tissue-paper, give a very good effect.*

<sup>1</sup> This copyrighted play may not be produced without payment of a royalty of five dollars. Correspondence relative to production should be addressed to *The Drama*, 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, in whose columns the play was first printed.

*A gong is struck by the gong-bearer and the Chorus enters. He is dressed in a long Mandarin coat and wears a headdress of feathers and beads. He walks very proudly to the center of the stage and bows. The gong is struck again and the Chorus raises his hand.*

CHORUS. I am the Chorus and I am here to tell you all about the play that my honorable actors are about to act upon this stage. They are all waiting behind the curtains with their make-up on and they are very anxious to begin so I shall be brief. [*The orchestra plays a few notes, stopped by the Chorus raising his hand.*] The name of our play is "The Stolen Prince." It is a sad story at first but do not weep too hard because it has a happy ending.

*[He claps his hands together. The Property Man, a funny fellow in a black coat and trousers and a long cue, enters and walks down stage standing beside the Chorus.]*

CHORUS. This is the Property Man. Bow! [*He strikes the Property Man on the top of the head with his fan and the Property Man bows.*] He will change the scenery and will hand the properties to the actors when they have need of them. He will take especial charge of Lee Mee, the duck. [*The Property Man goes, "Quack! Quack!" and the Chorus strikes him again on the head with his fan.*] Silence! It is not time for that! Are all your properties ready? [*The Property Man nods his head.*] The first scene of our play takes place in the garden of the Emperor Lang Moo, in the Middle Flower Kingdom, a thousand and one years ago. [*The Gong-Bearer strikes the gong.*] It is springtime and the blossoms are on the peach trees. It is a very important time in the household of the Emperor Lang Moo because a child is about to be born unto him and he prays it will be a son. [*To*

*the Property Man.*] Where is the blossoming peach tree?

*[The Property Man, who has been dreaming, starts and blinks; then shuffles up to the property box. He takes out a branch of imitation peach blossoms and crossing to the two chairs, he stands behind them holding the branch over them. Now and then he becomes tired of holding the branch in one hand and he carelessly shifts it to the other.]*

CHORUS. Long Fo and Wing Lee, a little sister and a little brother, children of the chief cook in the royal household, come under the peach tree to play together.

*[The Chorus bows and steps to the left where he stands throughout the play. There is music as Long Fo and Wing Lee enter.]*

LONG FO. Will you help me fly my kite, Wing Lee?

*[At the word kite, the Property Man drops the peach branch and goes to the box where he finds a paper kite on a short string. He gives it to Long Fo; then takes up the peach branch again.]*

WING LEE *[sitting down on one of the chairs]*. There is not enough wind, Long Fo. Let us sit here beneath the branches of the peach tree and wait for news about the baby who is coming to-day.

LONG FO. I do hope it will be a boy.

WING LEE. Yes. If it is a girl the Emperor will have her killed at once. Poor little thing.

LONG FO. Why are you so sorry for her? It is the law to kill girl babies because they are worth so little.

WING LEE. You say that because you are a boy, but I am very sorry for her.

LONG FO *[with contempt]*. You are a weak, weeping girl. I am a big strong man and I am going to fly my kite.

WING LEE. You cannot fly your kite because there isn't any wind.

LONG FO [*sitting down*]. Then I shall wait patiently until the wind shakes the branches of the peach tree.

[*The Gong-Bearer strikes the gong three times rapidly.*]

WING LEE [*jumping up*]. What is that?

LONG FO. The new baby has come to the Emperor's palace.

WING LEE. Oh, I tremble with excitement!

LONG FO. I feel sure it is a boy.

WING LEE. And I feel sure it is a girl. [*There is music.*]

[*Enter the Royal Nurse.*]

LONG FO. Nurse! Nurse! Tell me! Is it a boy?

WING LEE. It is a girl, is it not, nurse?

NURSE. It is both, my children!

WING LEE. Both?

LONG FO. How could that be?

NURSE. It is twins, my children. A boy and a girl.

[*The gong is struck. The Nurse and the two children bow. They go out. The Property Man takes the branch back to the corner and sits down on the box to rest.*]

CHORUS [*bowing*]. The next scene of our illustrious play takes place in the same garden. Three days have passed. The nurse is walking in the royal garden with the royal twins. The day is warm and full of the perfume of peach blossoms.

[*The Property Man returns with the peach branch and stands behind the chairs. The Nurse enters carrying two dolls, one on each arm. One doll has a string of jade around its neck. That is the boy. The other doll is dressed in white and is the girl.*]



NURSE [*sitting on one of the chairs and singing a little song to the twins*]. Go to sleep — Go to sleep — The wind is in the crooked tree;

[*The Property Man waves the peach branch back and forth.*]

And it sings a song to you.  
In the pool the goldfish three,  
Are sleeping too.

Go to sleep — Go to sleep — Go to sleep.

Go to sleep — Go to sleep — the moon is in the purple sky;  
And it smiles a smile at you.  
By the pool the dragon-fly,  
Is sleeping too.  
Go to sleep — Go to sleep — Go to sleep.

NURSE. Ah, my pretty babies, I love you both but one of you must leave me. [*To the girl doll.*] To-morrow you must die because you are a little girl.

[*The Property Man hands her an embroidered silk handkerchief and she wipes her eyes, first one and then the other.*]

NURSE [*holding up the doll with the string of jade around its neck*]. Ah, little one, you are the chosen of the gods because you were born a little boy. You will spend your happy childhood playing by the fish pond in the royal gardens. You will hear the Emperor's golden parrots sing and you will hear the sacred scarlet fish telling secrets to the sacred dragon-fly. When you become a man you will become the Emperor of this great and mighty Middle Flower Kingdom. Bright is your shining star. [*Holding up the girl doll.*] Ah, dark is your star, little one. It is almost set. To-morrow, at the hour of seven gongs, you die.

[*She wipes her eyes again. The gong is heard and there is music.*]

NURSE [*looking off to the left*]. By the great green cat-fish, what do I see? A robber in the garden stealing

cabbages as plain as can be!' I'll run and scare him away!

*[She places the two dolls on the chairs and runs off, waving her hands in the air. There is music. Long Fo and Wing Lee enter.]*

WING LEE. Here they are. The nurse has left them alone. Now is our chance.

LONG FO. I do not approve of this, Wing Lee. If we are found out, we will both have our heads cut off.

WING LEE. You promised to help me if I gave you my gold ball.

LONG FO. Oh, I'll help you all right. I never go back on my word, but I don't see what you want to save a girl for. They're so useless.

WING LEE. Quick! Don't talk any more. The nurse is coming back. Which is the girl?

LONG FO *[lifting up the doll with the jade beads]*. This one, of course. She has jade beads around her neck.

WING LEE. Give her to me. Now let's run to the river.

*[They run off to the right. The Nurse returns and goes to the chairs. She starts back in surprise. She cannot believe her eyes — looks again — looks all about her — beats her breast.]*

NURSE. Oh! Oh! Oh! The Prince has been stolen! Oh! Oh! Oh! I will have my head cut off for this! Oh! Oh! Oh! I must run away and hide myself in the mountains where they will never find me! Oh! Oh! Oh!

*[She runs off right, crying. The Orchestra makes a terrible din.]*

CHORUS *[bowing and raising his hand for silence]*. Our scene changes now. The action of our play moves from the garden of the Emperor Lang Moo to the green banks of the river Chang Hi. The Property Man will show you the river.

*[The Property Man puts the peach branch back into*

*the box and takes out a piece of blue cloth. He unrolls it on the floor. He walks up and down on it, pulling up the legs of his trousers to show you that the river is wet. Then he goes back to his box and sits down on it. He goes to sleep. There is music. Long Fo and Wing Lee enter running very fast and looking over their shoulders. Wing Lee carries the doll with the jade necklace. She almost runs on to the blue cloth.]*

LONG FO. Be careful! Do not go too near the river, Wing Lee. You will fall in and be drowned!

WING LEE. Where is the tub?

LONG FO [*glancing back at the Property Man, who is still asleep*]. Yes, where is the tub?

*[The Property Man snores. Long Fo and Wing Lee look helplessly at the Chorus.]*

CHORUS [*calling to the Property Man*]. The tub! The tub!

*[The Property Man answers with another snore.]*

CHORUS [*to the audience*]. Excuse him, my good friends, for he is very stupid. We only keep him because we get him cheap.

*[He claps his hands loudly. The Property Man jumps up as if he has been stuck with a pin. He looks about, bewildered.]*

CHORUS [*severely*]. The tub!

*[The Property Man takes a small wooden tub from the box and places it on the edge of the blue cloth. Then he goes back to his seat on the box.]*

WING LEE. Ah, there is the tub. We will put the little girl in the tub. The tub will float down the great river and some kind person will see it and will give the poor little girl a home. [*She kisses the doll and puts it in the tub.*] Good-bye, little girl. When I get back to the palace, I shall burn a stick of incense to the gods for your safe

voyage down the great river. Ah, now it is in the current. There it goes!

*[The Property Man shuffles over and pulls the tub slowly down to the other end of the blue cloth.*

*Wing Lee and Long Fo wave their handkerchiefs.]*

LONG FO. Now it has turned a bend in the river. It is out of sight. Let us go back to the palace, Wing Lee. I want to fly my kite.

WING LEE. There is not enough wind to fly your kite, Long Fo.

LONG FO. Oh, you always say that. Come on!

WING LEE *[looking sadly down the river]*. There are many things can happen to her. A storm may rise and sink the tub. The terrible dragon-fish may see her and swallow her alive. Poor little girl, I fear for her.

*[She wipes her eyes with her handkerchief.]*

LONG FO. Do not cry any more. You will get your eyes all red and then they will begin asking questions at the palace. Come along! Come along!

*[He takes her hand and they go out. There is music.]*

CHORUS. And now we follow the wooden tub on its long journey down the great river of Chang Hi. It sails all that night and all the next day and stops, at last, before the house-boat of Hi Tee, a poor but honest fisherman.

*[He signals to the Property Man who fetches a stick with a white piece of cloth tacked to it to represent a sail. He sets it above the two chairs. Then he returns to the box and takes out the duck, Lee Mee, a stuffed duck with a big yellow bill, and places it in the center of the blue cloth. He stands back with arms folded as music and the gong are heard and Hi Lee enters followed by his wife, Li Mo. They bow and sit side by side on the chairs. Hi Tee rows the boat with imaginary oars.]*

HI TEE. I am that poor but honest fisherman named, Hi Tee. This lady beside me is my wife, Li Mo. That

[*pointing to the duck*] is our little duck, Lee Mee. He is a trained duck and the fish he catches with his big bill he gives to us. We are very happy but we long for a child. Do we not, Li Mo?

LI MO. That is all we need to make us *completely* happy.

HI TEE. All day long we sail and sail down the great river Chang Hi and little Lee Mee swims merrily behind us, catching us fishes as we go. See, the wind is shaking the sails. [*The Property Man shakes the stick with the white cloth.*] Faster and faster now we go! The wind is so kind I shall not have to row any more to-day. I'll just sit still and watch the scenery go by.

[*He stops rowing with the imaginary oars. There is music.*]

HI TEE. But, merciful catfish, what do I see? A tub floating by just as plain as can be!

LI MO. So it is! A tub — with a baby in it!

HI TEE. I'll jump into the water and save the child. A short way down the stream, the dreadful rapids start. The tub will be upset and the baby will be drowned.

LI MO. Oh, save the child, Hi Tee!

[*Hi Tee jumps from the chairs onto the blue cloth, and making swimming motions with his arms, he picks up the tub and brings it back to the chairs.*]

LI MO. Give the poor little baby to me. I shall take care of it and bring it up as my own child.

[*She takes the doll and holds it in her arms.*]

HI TEE [*looking at it*]. It is a baby of high degree. It wears a beautiful chain of jade about its neck.

LI MO. The gods have answered our prayers.

HI TEE. Lee Mee, our faithful little duck, we have another mouth for you to feed. Now, three times a day, you must catch three extra fish to feed our baby here.

[*The Property Man gives an answering, "Quack! Quack!" and shakes the sail.*]

LI MO. Here we go! Here we go! Floating down the water. We thank the gods for this little child — be it son or daughter!

*[The Property Man quack-quacks again. Hi Tee and Li Mo rise, bow and go out, right. The Property Man puts the wooden tub back into the box. The gong crashes. The Property Man sits on his box and yawns. The Chorus comes down and raises his hand.]*

CHORUS. The first act of our illustrious play is now over.

You will excuse my actors while they are served a drink of tea to refresh themselves for the remainder of the performance? It is not easy work being actors and they are tired.

*[He bows and goes out to the left, curtain is not pulled. The Orchestra spends its time tuning up, and then the actress who has played the Nurse enters with a tray of tea in little Chinese bowls and serves tea to the Orchestra. They drink and return the bowls to the tray. The Nurse goes to serve tea to the Property Man, but finds him asleep; so shrugging her shoulders she leaves, drinking his bowl of tea herself. The gong is sounded. The Chorus reënters and takes the center of the stage. He bows.]*

CHORUS. Now that my actors have refreshed themselves we will proceed with our play. Nine years have passed away. We are once more on the river Chang Hi looking at the fishing boat of Hi Tee and his loving wife, Li Mo.

*[Hi Tee and Li Mo enter and bow. Hi Tee is wearing a gray cotton beard, the strings of which are tied around his ears.]*

CHORUS. As you can see by Hi Tee's beard, he is not as young as he used to be. His wife, Li Mo, is not as



young as she used to be either, but she keeps her hair black by putting fish grease on it.

*[Hi Tee and Li Mo take their places on the chairs.]*

CHORUS. And now you will see the hero of our play, the little Prince who was stolen. He does not know he is a Prince, and you who are sharing the secret must not tell him or you will spoil him and he will become unhappy longing for something he cannot have. His foster parents have named him Joy which is a very good name for such a bright and laughing boy.

*[There is music. Joy runs in and bows. He wears the same chain of jade around his neck. It looks very strange with the rest of his coarse, brown fishing costume. He turns to the chairs and waves to Hi Tee and Li Mo. They beckon him to come to them. He runs over to the chairs and sits between them.]*

HI TEE. Where have you been all day, my little Joy?

JOY. I have been digging mud-turtles with my friend Kee Hee, but we did not find any. Then we looked for fish with our nets but we could not find any fish either. I am hungry now, dear Mother.

LI MO *[shaking her head sadly]*. Alas, my poor boy, I am hungry, too, and so is your poor father, but there are no fish in the great river.

JOY. Why are there no fish in the great river?

HI TEE. Because, my son, the gods are angry. They have tied strings to all the fishes' tails and are holding them prisoners in the tall mountains where the river begins.

LI MO. If they do not untie the strings and let the fish float down to us, very soon, we will all die.

JOY. I will climb up the tall mountains to the place where the river begins and untie the fishes' tails. I am not afraid, Mother.

LI MO. The gods would kill you, my little son, and then what would I do without you?

JOY. Cannot Lee Mee, our faithful little duck, find any fish either?

LI MO. Can you find us any fish, Lee Mee?

[*They wait for a "Quack! Quack!" from the Property Man, but he is still asleep. The Chorus turns and sees him sleeping. He crosses to him with great dignity and taps him on the head with his fan. The Property Man leaps up, blinking.*]

CHORUS. You will be discharged after the play is over.

You have not given us a "Quack!"

PROPERTY MAN [*staring stupidly*]. Quack! Quack!

HI TEE. What does our little duck say?

PROPERTY MAN. Quack! Quack! Quack! Quack!

LI MO. He says he will search every river and every pond and every lake the whole world over until he finds a fish for us to eat.

JOY. I will go with him!

HI TEE. No! You must stay with us. Go, my good Lee Mee, and bring a fishie back to poor Hi Tee.

[*The Property Man shuffles forward and picks up the duck and tucks it under his arm. He shuffles off with it, giving a solemn, "Quack! Quack!"*]

LI MO. If there is a fish left in the river, the lake or the pond, Lee Mee will find it for us. He is the most faithful duck in the whole Middle Flower Kingdom.

JOY. I love Lee Mee! [*There is music.*]

CHORUS. An hour passes by and Lee Mee returns.

[*The Property Man enters with a duck. He has put into the beak of Lee Mee the fish carved out of wood and painted a bright scarlet. He seats Lee Mee down close to the chairs; then returns to his box.*]

HI TEE. Look! Look! Lee Mee has found a fish for us!

LI MO. Oh, good Lee Mee!

JOY. I have never seen such a beautiful fish before. It is as red as blood.

HI TEE. Where did you get it, Lee Mee?

PROPERTY MAN. Quack! Quack!

LI MO. He says he will not tell.

JOY. Let us eat it at once. I am very hungry!

*[Hi Tee reaches down and takes up the fish.]*

HI TEE. You may have the tail, Li Mo. I will have the head; and our son, the little Joy, may have the middle because it is the sweetest and the fattest. Give me my knife.

*[The Property Man takes a long wooden knife with curved blade from the box and gives it to Hi Tee. Hi Tee puts the fish on the edge of the chair and raises the knife over his head. The gong and loud music are heard. Two soldiers enter carrying tall bamboo poles. They point at the scarlet fish and rush at Hi Tee.]*

FIRST SOLDIER. You are my prisoner!

HI TEE. What have I done?

FIRST SOLDIER. You have stolen the Emperor's sacred scarlet fish from the royal fish pond! To-morrow, you and your family shall die!

LI MO. Oh, Lee Mee, why did you do it?

PROPERTY MAN *[mournfully]*. Quack! Quack!

FIRST SOLDIER. Come along! *[He picks up the fish. To the Second Soldier.]* Bring the rest of them.

*[He starts off with Hi Tee. The Second Soldier follows with Li Mo and Joy. As they are about to go out, Joy brushes aside the bamboo pole of the Second Soldier and rushes back to Lee Mee, the duck. He tucks it under his arm.]*

JOY. I would never leave you, Lee Mee.

PROPERTY MAN. Quack! Quack!

*[Joy rushes back to the Second Soldier and they all depart. The gong and music are heard.]*

CHORUS. And now we are back once more to the garden of the Emperor Lang Moo. It is the next morning. [*The Property Man rolls up the blue cloth and takes the sail down from the chairs.*] It is autumn time when the leaves are falling. [*The Property Man takes a handful of imitation autumn leaves from the box and walks solemnly across the stage scattering them left and right as he goes.*] It is the sad time of the year and all the Emperor's Court is sad because the Emperor is very ill. Everybody knows that the great Lang Moo will soon die and will pass above to the celestial kingdom. This is indeed sad in itself, but when an Emperor dies without a son to take his throne, then it is tragedy.

[*The gong is struck and the Royal Nurse enters. She is walking with a cane, for she now is very old and bent.*]

NURSE [*looking about her*]. Ah, me — Ah, my — many years have passed since I was banished from this royal garden. I am a very wretched old woman. It is all my fault because the mighty Emperor is dying without a son. Ah, me — Ah, my — [*She sits on one of the chairs and the Property Man gives her a large silk handkerchief to weep into. She weeps, first wiping one eye and then the other.*] I do not know what brought me back to-day, but something whispered in my ear and said that I should come. I left my mountain hiding-place and walked for three long nights and three long days. I am now so very old that no one will ever recognize me, so I am safe.

[*Long Fo and Wing Lee enter. They are now grown up and wear older headdresses.*]

WING LEE. It is here the execution will take place.

LONG FO. Yes, and the executioner should be here now. He is always on time.

NURSE. Pardon me, my children, but may I ask who is going to be executed?

WING LEE. Oh, don't you know?

NURSE. No. I am a stranger here.

WING LEE. Four heads are coming off this morning. The head of a fisherman, the head of his wife, the head of his son, and the head of a duck, Lee Mee.

NURSE. What have the poor souls done?

WING LEE. They have —

LONG FO. Let me tell her, Wing Lee. You are only a woman and you will get the story mixed up. [*To the Nurse.*] The little duck, Lee Mee, stole the Emperor's sacred scarlet fish from the royal fish pond and brought it to the fisherman and his family for them to eat.

NURSE. But if the duck stole the fish, why should they execute the fisherman and his family, too?

LONG FO. Because the duck belonged to the fisherman and the fisherman should have taught him better manners.

[*The gong is struck loudly.*]

WING LEE. Oh, here comes the executioner!

[*The Executioner enters walking very proudly. The Property Man hands him a wooden axe. The Executioner stands to one side as the gong sounds. Hi Tee walks in very slowly with his head bent. Li Mo enters next; then Joy carrying Lee Mee, the duck. They are followed by the two Soldiers. Hi Tee, Li Mo, and Joy form a straight line. The two Soldiers stand in front of them. The Property Man gives the First Soldier a scroll.*]

FIRST SOLDIER [*reading from the scroll*]. To-day, Hi Tee, fisherman on the river Chang Hi, his wife, Li Mo, their son Joy, and the most evil, bad-mannered duck, Lee Mee [*the Property Man quacks sadly*], will all die under the axe of the royal executioner. [*The Executioner swings his axe.*] The first to die will be the little boy named Joy,

so that his parents may have the extreme pleasure of seeing the axe fall upon his neck.

*[He motions to the Executioner who steps forward.]*

*Joy kisses his father and his mother good-bye and then kisses Lee Mee, the duck, handing it to Hi Tee. Then he steps bravely forward. He sinks to his knees and bows his head. The chain of jade is plainly seen around his neck. The Executioner raises his axe to strike.]*

WING LEE *[to Long Fo]*. I'm sure I've seen that chain of jade somewhere before.

FIRST SOLDIER. Wait, Executioner! I will remove this chain of jade. It is too beautiful to be cut by the Executioner's sword. I will keep it for my wife.

*[He takes the chain from Joy's neck.]*

NURSE *[jumping up]*. Oh, stay a moment! Where did he get that chain of jade?

FIRST SOLDIER. Who are you, old woman?

NURSE. You do not recognize me, for I am so very old, but I am Sing Lo, the royal nurse who long ago was banished from the Court because the little Prince was stolen while in my care. Do you remember?

WING LEE *[suddenly beginning to weep]*. Oh! Oh! Oh!

FIRST SOLDIER. What is the matter with you?

LONG FO. She is not feeling well, sir.

NURSE *[to Joy]*. Where did you get that chain of jade?

JOY. It has always been around my neck as long as I can remember.

NURSE *[to Hi Tee]*. Is this your son?

HI TEE. Y — yes.

NURSE. Your true son?

LI MO *[breaking down]*. He is not our true son, I must confess. We do not know who he is. We found him in a wooden tub floating down the river when he was only a tiny baby.



WING LEE. Oh! Oh! Oh!

NURSE. He is the stolen prince!

FIRST SOLDIER. What!

WING LEE. It's true.

FIRST SOLDIER. What do you know about it, Wing Lee?

WING LEE. I was the one who stole him.

NURSE. You?

WING LEE. Yes, when I was a little child. The nurse had left the twins beneath the peach tree. They were going to kill the little girl, so I thought I would steal her away. By mistake, I stole the little Prince. I sent him down the river in a wooden tub with that chain of jade around his neck.

JOY [*jumping up*]. What are you all talking about? Aren't you ever going to cut off my head? I'm tired waiting.

NURSE [*taking him in her arms*]. We are not going to cut off your head. Instead, we are going to put a crown on it. You are the royal son of the mighty Emperor Lang Moo who now is dying in his royal bed. The throne of the Middle Flower Kingdom will soon be yours.

FIRST SOLDIER. I will run and tell the Emperor.

SECOND SOLDIER. And so will I! [*They run out.*]

LONG FO [*to Wing Lee*]. What did you say anything for? Now *we* will be beheaded.

NURSE. Oh, no you won't. The Emperor will be so glad to get his son back that he will smile to the end of his days.

JOY. Is it really true I am the Prince? Mother, is it really true?

LI MO. Yes, my little Joy. [*She weeps.*]

JOY. Why do you weep, Mother?

LI MO. Because you will become the Emperor and I shall never see you again.

JOY. Oh, yes you will, Mother. You will always be next to my heart. You and Father and good Lee Mee will always be my dearest dears.

PROPERTY MAN. Quack! Quack!

*[The First and Second Soldiers return.]*

FIRST SOLDIER. Little Prince, the Emperor awaits you in the royal bed-chamber. Will His Royal Highness come?

JOY. May I bring my family along too?

FIRST SOLDIER. Of course, Your Highness.

JOY *[taking Li Mo's hand]*. Come along, Mother. You and I will go in together. Hi Tee, you, and Lee Mee follow close behind.

*[Music and the gong are heard as in procession, Joy and Li Mo, followed by Hi Tee carrying Lee Mee, go out. The two soldiers close in at the last.]*

LONG FO *[to the Executioner]*. Why do you pull such a long face, Executioner? Are you angry because you couldn't use your axe?

EXECUTIONER *[growling]*. Burrrr!

*[He shoulders his axe and stalks off.]*

NURSE. Let us tiptoe down the royal hall and peek through the royal key-hole into the royal bed-chamber. I would like to see the Emperor greet his little son.

*[There is music. With fingers on lips and stepping very high on tiptoes, they start off in line, led by the Nurse. The Property Man starts to follow.]*

CHORUS. Stop!

*[The Property Man stops. The others go out.]*

CHORUS. You cannot peek through the royal keyhole because you are only the Property Man.

PROPERTY MAN *[hanging his head]*. Quack! Quack!

CHORUS *[stepping forward and bowing]*. My good and patient friends, our play is over. For your kind attention I bow, and bow and bow.

*[He bows three times. The Property Man bows three times. Chorus turns and sees him.]*

CHORUS [*snapping open his fan with great dignity*]. You are discharged!

[*He sweeps off to the left The Property Man shrugs his shoulders and goes out to the right.*]

[*The curtain is pulled back showing tableau of all the characters grouped around Joy who is seated on one of the black chairs with a crown on his head. In his arms he holds Lee Mee, the duck. Li Mo stands next to him and on the other side, Hi Tee.*]

CURTAIN

# THE END OF THE RAINBOW<sup>1</sup>

A FANTASY IN MINIATURE

By JAMES PLAISTED WEBBER

## CHARACTERS

PIERROT

PIERRETTE

WILL O' THE WISP

SCENE: *A Wild Wood.*

TIME: *An April Evening.*

[*Enter Pierrot and Pierrette, the latter very weary of journeying through the forest.*]

PIERRETTE. O dear Pierrot,

'Twas hours ago

The sunshiny showerlet passed;

The rainbow has faded,

The wild wood is shaded,

And the young April moon overcast.

PIERROT. Pin your faith to the fable:

Don't you know, were one able

To find where the rainbow comes down,

One would light on more gold

Than one's coffers could hold,

Enough for to buy London town?

PIERRETTE. Yes and no, Pierrot;

But no further let's go

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Through this forest so darksome-ly eerie:

For I very much fear

That you, too, my dear,

Are as footsore as I am, and weary.

PIERROT. Ha' done, Pierrette!

It may be far yet

I must journey through dark and through cold;

But later or soon,

'Neath the light o' the moon,

I shall find me the great pot of gold.

PIERRETTE. O, once 'twas my love,

That, by heaven above,

You swore was your heart's sole desire:

And were I but won,

There'd be naught 'neath the sun

As dear as myself by your fire.

And then, it was fame:

To have noised your name

On the tongue of young and of old;

But when cottage and hall,

All flocked at your call,

You then longed for nothing but gold.

PIERROT. What you say may be true,

But, Pierrette, 'tis to you

I should look for my comfort and hope:

And when gaining my end,

You're a pretty poor friend

To do nothing but grumble and mope.

*[Pierrette has sunk on the ground in a sad little heap  
and is crying softly.]*

PIERROT. Well, sit there and cry!

If you live or you die,

I'll keep up my search till the last;

And I think some fine morrow,

You'll see to your sorrow,

What you lost by not holding fast.  
For in coach and with four,  
I shall roll past your door,  
While the world and his wife smile on me;  
But the poor Pierrette,  
Like a grizzled grisette,  
I never, no never, will see!

PIERRETTE. Pierrot, if I could,  
I'd still trudge the wood,  
But I'm only a burden, you say.  
God grant that the treasure  
You find in full measure  
Or ever the first peep o' day!

PIERROT [*snapping his fingers*].  
Tush! that for your flow  
Of fine words!

[*Pierrot quite ruthlessly leaves her.*]

PIERRETTE. Pierrot,  
Farewell, You've grown heartless of late:  
So now in the cold,  
I lie down on the mold,  
And give myself up to my fate.  
[*As Pierrette is about to lie down, a shaft of moon-  
light strikes through the green wood.*]  
But alack, there's the moon,  
And they say, late or soon,  
Who sleeps in the bright light of it,  
Will find that his head  
Has been turned, and from bed  
The dreamer'll arise without wit.  
Then I take me this bough,  
To cover me now,  
And so, if I live or I die,  
They'll not say, "How sad!  
But the poor maid went mad —  
And that made her Pierrot fly."



[*Ere she lies down, Pierrette offers this prayer to Our Lady.*]

Our Lady, I pray,  
To Pierrot on his way  
Give guidance forever and ever:  
And grant some day he  
May come back to me  
To leave me, ah, never, no never!

[*As Pierrette drops off to sleep, a faery music is heard, and Will o' the Wisp with his lanthorn, enters, addressing, first, the audience, and later, Pierrette.*]

WILL O' THE WISP. Dear friends, let me lisp,

I'm Will o' the Wisp.  
I glide o'er the marsh and the fen.  
I lead wildest fancies  
On merry, mad dances,  
And often I lead foolish men.  
So, sweet Pierrette,  
Fear not you, nor fret:  
E'en now, your false Pierrot  
Wanders round in a ring  
That shortly will bring  
His steps to your bedside, I know.

[*There is a moment of darkness to suggest a lapse of time, during which the faery music is resumed. As the light returns, Pierrot reënters.*]

PIERROT. [*He calls.*] Pierrette! Pierrette!

How you plagued me! and yet  
I'm tired and lonely and blue.  
I verily think,  
Though just on the brink  
Of high fortune, I want only you.  
Yes, I vow by my soul,  
Just in reach of my goal,

I've learned since I left her this while  
That there's nothing to me  
By land or by sea  
That's worthy compare with her smile.

*[Pierrot suddenly notes where the moonlight falls  
on Pierrette's hair, gleaming through the bough  
which she has laid over her head.]*

But stay! what is here?  
By all that is dear,

I swear there's the gleam of my gold.  
Beneath yonder bough  
Is awaiting me now

My treasure to have and to hold.  
But, alas! — vain regret —  
Could I find Pierrette,

I'd toss it away down the wind.  
Yea, though the moon gleams  
On the world's wealth, it seems

I'm minded to leave it behind.

PIERRETTE. *[She murmurs in her sleep.]* O dear Pierrot!

PIERROT *[unable to locate the voice]*. 'Tis her voice! — I  
know.

O speak to me once and again!

Pierrette, tell me where  
In earth or in air

You are, or I die in my pain.

PIERRETTE *[still sleeping]*. Pierrot! Pierrot!

PIERROT. Where is she? Why lo!

'Tis she that lies 'neath yonder bough!

And her dear golden hair,

'Twas that, I will swear,

I took for my treasure e'en now.

PIERRETTE *[awaking]*. Ah, Pierrot, dear —

PIERROT *[kneeling behind her and supporting her]*. Sweet  
child, never fear!

PIERRETTE. Have you found 't, Pierrot? Tell me true.

PIERROT. Pierrette, do you care?

PIERRETTE. Not I, how *I* fare,

But only what's fortun'd to you.

PIERROT. Then hark, sweetest child,

Though I've long been beguiled,

It's never too late, dear, to mend;

And I've found, for my part,

That your own loving heart

Is my wealth at the true rainbow's end!

*[Pierrette looks up into Pierrot's face with a smile of unutterable happiness and then — ]*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

# THE PRINCESS ON THE ROAD <sup>1</sup>

By KATHLEEN CONYNGHAM GREENE

## PERSONS

THE PRINCESS

A JUGGLER

LABOURERS, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN

SCENE: *The street of a country village*

*A wide road leads into the little village. A market cross on three steps stands in the middle of the road. To the left is a pond with some ducks splashing about in it. To the right are a few cottages, gardens in front of them, filled with flowers.*

*The Princess enters, walking along the road. She is dusty, the edge of her skirt is torn, and one of her shoes has come off. She wears her hair in a long pig-tail under a cotton handkerchief. She is picking the flowers that hang out of the cottage gardens, and singing as she goes.*

PRINCESS [*singing*]:

“For me are your songs and your smiles and your tears,  
For me, for ever, for all the years,  
I have conquerèd all your fears,  
Now, for ever, for all the years.  
For me are you, are you and your smile,  
Now, for ever and all the while . . .”

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by arrangement with the author and her publisher, Mr. John Lane, The Bodley Head, London. Correspondence in regard to performances of this play should be addressed to Hanson Hart Webster, 2 Park Street, Boston.

*[She sits down on the steps of the cross with the flowers in her lap.]*

PRINCESS. Where am I now? I must be twelve miles from home. And no one has known me! How I will laugh at Florimund! This is life! If I can do this once in every month I shall not mind the sentries and the banquets. Our good Florimund will find me an angel when I return. How he will laugh when he sees my dust and my rags! Can I get a coach from here, I wonder, to take me home? *[She twists her red rose round and round between her fingers.]* Where are all the people? This is like a village of the dead. I am thirsty. I will have a glass of milk, and then one of these good villagers shall drive me home. Where are they all? *[She rests her two hands on the step and looks round.]* No one in sight. Hoh! la la!

*[She calls loudly.]*

*[A little child appears out of one of the cottages and looks at her over the gate.]*

PRINCESS *[beckoning with her fingers]*. Come here, little one! Where are all the people?

CHILD *[with his finger in his mouth]*. In th' fields. Harvesting!

PRINCESS. Harvest? Oh, this is very rural! Tell me, has your mother any milk?

CHILD. Aye.

PRINCESS. Get me a cup of milk, will you not? I am very thirsty.

CHILD *[pointing over his shoulder towards the cottage]*. In there.

PRINCESS *[coming down the steps]*. Oh, it is in there, is it? And I must go and get it for myself? This is a great adventure! And what a tale for Florimund!

*[She goes across the road, through the garden, and disappears into the cottage. In a few minutes she comes out, carrying a jug and a cup, a loaf of bread and a knife.]*

PRINCESS. Now, little one, we will eat here on the steps and see when your father and mother come home. Will you not have a bit of this good white bread?

CHILD [*standing up straight at the foot of the cross with his hands behind his back*]. No. 'Tis the Sunday loaf.

PRINCESS. But eat now. There will be some for Sunday as well.

CHILD. Nay. Mother'll beat me.

*[He runs back into the cottage. The Princess crumbles the remains of the bread between her fingers and throws it on to the road for the ducks.]*

PRINCESS [*singing*]:

“And mine are your smiles and your songs and your tears,  
Now, for ever, for all the years . . .”

*[There is a sound of many voices coming along the road. The Princess pulls down the torn hem of her skirt and pushes back the hair from her face.]*

PRINCESS [*to herself*]. Here are the harvesters! Now to get a cart and to drive home. I could not walk another three steps! How Florimund will laugh! Indeed I am quite like a girl of the people!

*[She sticks out her dusty shoeless foot and looks at it. The villagers enter, straggling one by one. Men and women with rakes and scythes, one woman carrying a heavy basket of apples. The first woman stops at the foot of the cross and stands with arms akimbo, looking up at the Princess.]*

FIRST WOMAN. And who is this?

PRINCESS [*nodding and smiling*]. Good evening, good dame.

FIRST WOMAN. Oh! good evening!

*[The others gather up, talking and laughing, and put down their burdens round the steps of the cross.]*



PRINCESS. Will one of you have the goodness to harness a cart for me? I wish to return to the town.

*[There is a chorus of laughter.]*

FIRST MAN. Eh! No doubt!

*[He turns away and spits on to the road.]*

PRINCESS *[standing up]*. Will you have the goodness to do it for me now? I must return at once to the town.

SECOND WOMAN *[sitting down on the lowest step and tying her shoe]*. She's cracked, no doubt, poor girl!

PRINCESS. I have asked you twice. Did you hear me?

SECOND MAN. Aye! Ask again and then move on. We can't have vagabonds here.

PRINCESS *[sitting down and laughing helplessly]*. Oh, Florimund! How he will laugh!

THIRD WOMAN *[very shrill-voiced, calling out from the crowd]*. What is that? Is it my jug there on the step? Hold it up?

PRINCESS *[holding up the jug]*. Is it yours? I took it from the cottage there on the right.

*[She points towards the cottage.]*

THIRD WOMAN. She took it! She took it! She tells me so! *[She pushes past the other people on to the steps.]* And my knife! And my cup! And plate!

*[Her voice gets shriller and shriller. The little child squeezes through the bystanders and comes up to her.]*

CHILD. Mother! She took the loaf for Sunday! She gave it to the ducks, but I wouldn't eat it!

THIRD WOMAN. And my Sunday loaf!

*[She flings her hand up over her head.]*

SECOND MAN *[coming up the steps]*. Did 'e do it? Did 'e take the things?

PRINCESS *[cowering back against the stem of the cross]*. Yes! I took them.

THIRD WOMAN. Oh, the brazen-faced hussy! My jug and my loaf! What will we have for Sunday?

PRINCESS. I'm sorry. I did...

THIRD WOMAN. Sorry... Sorry... So will you be! And how do we know what else may not have gone?

FIRST WOMAN. That rose there! That will be from my garden!

FOURTH WOMAN. My flowers too! She's robbed more than th' gardens, we'll see!

THIRD WOMAN. Search her! Search her!

*[She seizes the Princess by the shoulders and pulls at the front of her dress. The Princess screams and pushes her off with her hands.]*

PRINCESS. Oh! leave me! leave me! I'll tell you... I'll tell you who I am!

FIRST WOMAN. 'Tis easy to see what you are! The beauty!

FIRST MAN. Where is the child? He'll say. *[To the child.]*

Answer me now! Did she go into the cottage?

CHILD. Aye. She did.

THIRD WOMAN *[who has been feeling over the Princess]*.

There's nothing here upon her.

FIRST WOMAN *[disconsolately]*. Nothing?

THIRD WOMAN *[triumphantly]*. Aye, and that shows to me that there must be another one in it! She has passed things to another who has gone off with them! *[She seizes the Princess by the shoulder.]* Where are they? The things 'e took?

PRINCESS *[trembling]*. I took nothing.

THIRD WOMAN. Why did 'e go there into my house?

PRINCESS. I only took the bread and...

THIRD WOMAN. ...and...and... Do 'e all hear that?

SECOND MAN. Let me come. I'll make her talk!

*[He comes up the steps and tries to grasp her arm.]*

PRINCESS *[screaming]*. No! No! No! I tell you I am the Princess! Oh! can't you believe what I say?

SEVERAL VOICES [*scornfully*]. The Princess! The Princess!  
THIRD MAN. Get her to the pond. She'll tell us what she's taken!

SEVERAL. Aye! The pond!

PRINCESS [*putting her hands over her eyes*]. No! No! No!  
I have taken nothing! Only the bread; I was hungry!  
[*The Third Man seizes her hand.*] Oh! don't touch me! Can't you see? Don't you know? I am the Princess.

THIRD WOMAN [*pointing to Princess's foot*]. Without'n a shoe! And in rags! The Princess!

[*Shrieks of laughter from the crowd.*]

PRINCESS. Won't you understand? It was for an adventure! Because my husband . . . ! Oh! Florimund!

[*The First Woman has come round from behind and seized her by the shoulders.*]

FIRST WOMAN. Now up and stand, my hussy, and we'll see what cold water'll make 'e say!

SECOND MAN [*from the background*]. Whip her out of the place, the vagabond!

SEVERAL. Have some fun with her first!

[*The Princess flings her arms round the cross and screams.*]

THIRD WOMAN. Heat an iron at the forge! That'll make her speak! Like as not she took that hen and chickens of mine I lost last week!

SEVERAL. No! The water! The water! Fetch her to the pond!

PRINCESS [*turning round with her hands clasped behind her round the cross*]. I am the Princess! Oh! can't you believe me? I am the Princess!

[*The Juggler has come up the road and is standing on the outskirts of the crowd. He is richly dressed and is followed by a boy with a basket.*]

JUGGLER. Hello! Hello! What have we here?

SEVERAL MEN [*turning round*]. Oh! A gentleman!

[*The First Man takes off his cap. The Juggler salutes briskly.*]

PRINCESS [*shrilly*]. It is the man who came to the Palace!

You remember me! Don't you remember me?

JUGGLER. What? [*He runs up the steps, pushing aside the people. The Princess holds out her hand. He looks at her in amazement, then takes her hand and kisses it.*] What? Your Highness? Is it . . . ? What is all this?

PRINCESS [*sobbing*]. Oh! I wanted an adventure. I left them all and borrowed a peasant girl's clothes. I came along the road, picking flowers . . . all alone . . . so free . . . Then these set upon me and said I had stolen their things. I only took a little milk and bread and flowers. And they won't know who I am.

[*The people have been watching from the foot of the steps.*]

THIRD WOMAN [*loudly*]. Now, young sir! Let her be! We must finish our fun with her!

SECOND MAN. Whip her out of the place, the vagabond!

JUGGLER [*turning round and speaking very clearly*]. Good people, you do not know what you are doing! This is Her Highness the Princess, the newly married consort of our illustrious Prince Florimund.

A VOICE. Princess! Ha! Ha!

ANOTHER VOICE. Why is she dressed up so then?

JUGGLER. For her own pleasure the Princess put on the simple clothes of a village girl . . .

A VOICE. What! Those'n rags?

JUGGLER. . . . and came for a walk into the country.

THIRD WOMAN [*shrilly*]. 'Tis likely, for a Princess! Young man, give her here! We'll duck her!

SECOND MAN. A vagabond, a vagabond! Whip her out of the place!

JUGGLER. I tell you I myself had the honour of giving a

performance before Her Highness last week. Several performances. Her Highness's grace and condescension even went so far that she deigned . . .

FIRST WOMAN. Her Highness! Grace! Let be, young man! Princesses behave as Princesses should. This is but a common vagabond!

SECOND MAN. And whip her out of the place!

*[The woman comes up the steps. The Second Man is cracking a cart whip in the background.]*

JUGGLER. I tell you, you are wrong! This is a gracious lady!

PRINCESS. Oh! tell them if they will let me go that my husband will give them anything they ask for!

JUGGLER. One and all they deserve the gallows!

PRINCESS. Do not make them more angry! Good people, if you will believe me, if you will let me just go quietly home, you may have anything you can ask for! Gold . . . and silver . . . *[She looks round]* . . . ducks, a hundred jugs and plates, a hundred loaves of bread . . . I swear that I can give you this!

JUGGLER. And I swear to you that she can do all she says.

FIRST WOMAN. All very well, but how'll we know? Show us something that'll prove it. What can 'e do? Princess, eh?

JUGGLER *[low and eagerly]*. What can Your Highness do? Quick! all may depend on this!

PRINCESS *[putting her hand up to her face]*. What can I do? What can I do?

*[The Second Man cracks his whip loudly, close to her ear. Some one throws a stone into the pond with a loud splash. There is a shrill laugh.]*

A VOICE. Splash her in!

JUGGLER *[to the crowd]*. Her Highness can sing. No one can mistake the voice of a Princess!

FIRST MAN. Sing, can 'e? Let her sing to us, then, Princess or no Princess.

PRINCESS [*looking round*]. Have you a guitar? A viol?

SECOND WOMAN. No, my dear.

[*There is a burst of laughter. The Second Man is chasing the screaming children about the road with his whip. The Princess clasps her hands and sings quaveringly.*]

"For me are your smiles and your songs and your tears,  
Mine for ever, for all the years . . ."

[*There is another burst of laughter.*]

A VOICE. Singing! Eh? Can 'e sing? "For me are your tears!" So they will be when 'e's in the pond!

THIRD MAN [*mimicking her in a brassy falsetto*].

"Fer me are your smiles, fer me are your tears!"

[*Loud laughter from all sides.*]

JUGGLER. Oh! Your Highness, what can you do?

PRINCESS. I can dance! Good people, I can dance for you!

SECOND MAN. Dance down the street at the whip end, the vagabond!

THIRD MAN. Aye! Let 'e dance! Let us see how a Princess can dance!

[*The Princess comes down from the steps and stands in the dust in the middle of the ring of villagers. She holds her torn skirts in her hands and looks round vaguely.*]

PRINCESS. The music? Will you play?

FIRST MAN. The music. Don't 'e hear it?

JUGGLER [*breathing very fast*]. Your Highness, there is no music.

[*The Princess makes the first steps of a minuet.*]

FIRST WOMAN. Dancing! That's dancing! As Princesses dance! [*She laughs loudly.*]

BET. Oh! lor!

FIRST WOMAN [*pushing her forward*]. Here, Bet, can 'e dance like that?



BET [*giggling*]. Oh! lor! [*She puts her hands on her hips and kicks about her legs.*] Dancing! Oh! lor!

SECOND MAN [*from the outskirts of the crowd*]. Give her here! I'll make her dance!

[*The Princess runs up the steps and crouches down against the cross. The Juggler stands over her glaring at the people.*]

FIRST WOMAN [*loudly and authoritatively*]. Now here, then, young man! Give us your Princess! We have given her a chance to show herself! Could she ha' danced or could she ha' sung we'd ha' believed she were more'n a vagabond . . .

THIRD WOMAN [*shrilly*]. Thieving hussy!

FIRST WOMAN. . . . But she can do nothing. So we'll have a bit of fun with her and send her out on the road.

SECOND MAN. Whip her out of the place!

BET [*giggling*]. Dance again! Let 'e dance again!

THIRD MAN [*squeezing Bet round the waist*]. Here's one as can dance. [*Bet struggles and shrieks ecstatically.*]

THIRD WOMAN. Come on now!

[*She grasps the Princess's arm.*]

JUGGLER [*pushing himself between*]. I tell you, you are mad fools! You will have your houses burnt above your heads! Do you think the Prince will pardon such treatment as this? And, if you kill her, as you will surely kill her, a delicate woman! . . . do you think the Prince will be content till he has seen you all, men, women, and children, dead before his eyes? Can't you see that this is not a common road woman?

[*Some people look at one another nervously.*]

FIRST MAN. Let 'e show us something! What can 'e do? We won't let vagabonds pass!

[*The Juggler looks round in despair. He sees his boy holding the basket on the outskirts of the crowd, and signals to him wildly. Then he turns to the Princess.*]

JUGGLER. Does Your Highness remember? Could Your Highness do the trick with the balls that you were so gracious as to learn from me?

PRINCESS. Throwing the balls? Oh, yes! I used to play with my sisters.

JUGGLER. Your Highness would deign?

PRINCESS. I could do it. I think I could do it.

*[She pushes up the sleeve from her arm.]*

JUGGLER *[to the crowd, taking a deep breath]*. You ask to see some sign that this is a Princess, a lady from the highest places in the land? Well . . . since you must see . . . ! Which of you can throw a ball into the air and catch it?

BET *[from the foreground where she is peering impertinently at the Princess]*. I could.

JUGGLER. Which of you can throw two balls and catch them?

WOMAN *[pushing forward a small boy]*. Johnny here, he can.

JUGGLER. Which of you could throw three balls, and four and five and keep them flying above the ground? Which of you?

*[The Juggler's boy pushes up to the steps with his gayly decorated basket. The Juggler fumbles with the strings.]*

PRINCESS *[eagerly]*. No. No. Give me that basket of apples!

*[The people are all listening and watching. The Second Woman drags up the basket of apples. The Princess stoops down and takes three apples into her lap. She throws them up and catches them again, keeping them flying in the air at once.]*

FIRST MAN. See her now? Could 'e do that, Bet? Could 'e, Johnny?

JOHNNY [*watching open-mouthed*]. Nay!

[*The Princess takes another apple and keeps four flying at once.*]

FIRST WOMAN. Do 'e see? Do 'e see?

SECOND WOMAN. Look at her hands? She never did no scrubbing!

[*The Juggler leans against the cross with folded arms, looking at the ground. The Princess takes a fifth apple. A loud murmur of admiration comes from the crowd.*]

PRINCESS [*singing, keeping the apples spinning from hand to hand*]:

“For me are your songs and your smiles and your tears,  
Mine for ever, through all the years;  
Give me your hand, forget your fears . . .”

FIRST MAN. Could 'e do that? Could 'e?

[*The people press all forward watching.*]

FIRST WOMAN. Do 'e see the lace at her elbow? Under the ragged sleeve?

SECOND MAN [*holding his breath*]. Will she drop it now . . . ?  
No!

PRINCESS [*singing*]:

“I have conquered all your fears,  
For ever, for ever, for all the years,  
And mine for ever shall be your smile . . .”

Throw me another apple!

FIRST WOMAN [*in awe*]. What! Another apple!

THIRD WOMAN. Give it now!

[*A man comes forward sheepishly with an apple.*]

PRINCESS [*imperiously*]. Throw it! Throw it!

[*She catches it and spins it with the others. The six apples jump up and down round her like the weaving of a pattern. A cry of admiration comes from the crowd.*]

PRINCESS [*singing*]:

“Mine for ever, for all the years . . .”

[*She spins one apple at Johnny, who is gazing with open mouth.*] For you!

[*She spins another at Bet, who drops it and gropes on her knees after it in the dust. The third flies up in the air. The Juggler gives a start, spreads out his two palms and catches it. The Princess stands up, three apples leaping up and down from her hands. She looks round at the crowd of faces.*]

PRINCESS. Whoever catches this may lend me a cart.

[*She spins one apple into the crowd.*] Whoever catches this may lend me a horse. [*She throws a second.*] And whoever this . . . [*She tosses it up and down.*] . . . may drive me back to the town.

[*She throws the last apple up into the air. There is a scramble.*]

SEVERAL VOICES. I caught it . . . I did . . . I.

[*The Princess sinks down on the step. A battered country cart is dragged to the front of the cross. Some one brings out an old shaggy-legged horse. The Third Man climbs on to the front of the cart, the Second Man hands him the whip which he waves with a beautiful flourish. The Juggler lifts the Princess's hand to his lips.*]

JUGGLER. Your Highness's carriage waits!

CURTAIN

# “GOOD-NIGHT, BABETTE!”<sup>1</sup>

BY AUSTIN DOBSON

## CHARACTERS

MONSIEUR VIEUXBOIS

BABETTE

SCENE. — *A small neat room. In a high Voltaire chair sits a white-haired old gentleman.*

M. VIEUXBOIS [*turning querulously*]. Day of my life!  
Where can she get?

Babette! I say! Babette! — Babette!

BABETTE [*entering hurriedly*]. Coming, M'sieu'! If  
M'sieu' speaks

So loud, he won't be well for weeks!

M. VIEUXBOIS. Where have you been?

BABETTE. Why, M'sieu' knows: —

April! . . . Ville-d'Avray! . . . Ma'am'-selle Rose!

M. VIEUXBOIS. Ah! I am old, — and I forget.

Was the place growing green, Babette?

BABETTE. But of a greenness! — yes, M'sieu'!

And then the sky so blue! — so blue! —

And when I dropped my *immortelle*,

How the birds sang!

[*Lifting her apron to her eyes.*]

This poor Ma'am'selle!

<sup>1</sup> From *Proverbs in Porcelain*. Reprinted by arrangement with the publisher, Mr. Humphrey Milford, the Oxford University Press, London, and by permission of Mr. Alban Dobson. Correspondence in regard to performances should be addressed to Hanson Hart Webster, 2 Park Street, Boston.

M. VIEUXBOIS. You're a good girl, Babette, but she, —  
 She was an Angel, verily.  
 Sometimes I think I see her yet  
 Stand smiling by the cabinet;  
 And once, I know, she peeped and laughed  
 Betwixt the curtains . . .  
 Where's the draught?

[*She gives him a cup.*]

Now I shall sleep, I think, Babette; —  
 Sing me your Norman *chansonnette*.  
 BABETTE [*sings*].

Once at the Angelus  
 (Ere I was dead),  
 Angels all glorious  
 Came to my Bed; —  
 Angels in blue and white  
 Crowned on the Head.

M. VIEUXBOIS [*drowsily*]. She was an Angel . . . Once she  
 laughed . . .

What, was I dreaming?

Where's the draught?

BABETTE [*showing the empty cup*]. The draught, M'sieu'?

M. VIEUXBOIS. How I forget!

I am so old! But sing, Babette!

BABETTE [*sings*].

One was the Friend I left  
 Stark in the Snow;  
 One was the Wife that died  
 Long, — long ago;  
 One was the Love I lost . . .  
 How could she know?

M. VIEUXBOIS [*murmuring*]. Ah, Paul! . . . old Paul! . . .  
 Eulalie too!

And Rose . . . And O! . . . the sky so blue!



BABETTE [*sings*].

One had my Mother's eyes,  
Wistful and mild;  
One had my Father's face;  
One was a Child:  
All of them bent to me, —  
Bent down and smiled!

He is asleep !

M. VIEUXBOIS [*almost inaudibly*]. How I forget!

I am so old . . . Good-night, Babette!

CURTAIN

# TO DUST RETURNING <sup>1</sup>

By ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

## CHARACTERS

THE KING.

THE COURT FOOL

A YOUTH

A GIRL

A PAGE

AN OLD MAN

MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

SCENE: *The palace garden, in the centre of which stands a sundial. The King, absorbed in meditation, watches the shadow move across the dial's face. The Court Fool, a fantastic figure, enters, with a superb air, holding in his hand something which cannot be seen. He is pursued by pages, youths, and maidens of the Court.*

THE CROWD. Fool! Fool!

A YOUTH. He swears that in his hand he holds

The bulwarks of the earth!

A GIRL [*to the King*]. Sire, is it true?

A YOUTH. His hand contains great empires!

A PAGE. Kingdoms!

A GIRL. Crowns!

A YOUTH [*to the Jester*]. Prove it! give me a star!

A GIRL [*to the King*]. Oh, Sire, he says

That in his hand he holds a power and glory

More great than yours!

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A YOUTH [*to the Jester*]. Then grant to us our wishes!

THE FOOL. Wish! And I'll grant it!

FIRST GIRL. Please, some satin slippers!

THE FOOL. I have them here!

FIRST GIRL. Painted with flying cherubs?

THE FOOL. With flying cherubs! Lined with sky blue satin!

A YOUTH. I want a kingdom!

THE FOOL. Kingdoms? I have plenty.

SECOND GIRL. A scarlet bonnet!

THIRD GIRL. I would like a lover.

In splendid rich apparel! Have you got him?

THE FOOL. Bonnets and lovers jostle one another.

A BOY. I want a war-horse white as milk, and stamping!

FIRST CHILD. Some wooden soldiers!

SECOND CHILD. And a little trumpet!

A PAGE. Glory I want!

THE FOOL. My hand is full of glory.

THE OLD MAN. I'm blind! I want to die!

THE FOOL. I've death abundant.

THE CROWD. A dancing monkey! Jewels! Stars!

THE FOOL [*addressing the King*]. And you?

THE KING [*pointing to the shadow on the dial*]. I want an answer to the creeping shadow

That marks off time.

THE FOOL [*holding his hand high above his head*]. Look, then! I have the answer

To everything that is. This small right hand  
Contains the sum of all desires — the bourne  
For which life strives — the solace unto death!

I have more power in this fragile hand  
Than kings may covet; all the heritage  
Of them that reign — kingdoms and battles, powers,  
Banners and hosts of war, and crowns and thorns,  
Aye, and the kings that wear them —

THE KING. Fool, explain this.

THE FOOL. Wonderful hand! It is so full of stars  
I hardly hold them! It is splashed with scarlet!  
Thunders and tumult — these go streaming through it!  
A thousand battles rock and riot in it!  
Cities are in it — I can hear them breathing —  
Kingdoms and crowns, yes, nations have I here!  
And hearts! My child, those cherub painted slippers  
Are mad in it for dancing! A scarlet bonnet  
Flames among fallen cities! I hold the sum  
And substance of this world. Oh, look! The glory!  
I see it trickling out between my fingers!  
Easy to capture it! I reached my hand  
And scooped up splendor!

THE CROWD. Give! Oh, show it! Give us!

THE FOOL. Then take —

*[Lets fall handful of dust.]*

THE KING. It's dust!

THE FOOL. What would you have? This world  
From dust created, unto dust returns.

CURTAIN

# THE TRAVELLING MAN<sup>1</sup>

A MIRACLE PLAY

By LADY GREGORY

## PERSONS

A MOTHER

A CHILD

A TRAVELLING MAN

SCENE: *A cottage kitchen. A woman setting out a bowl and jug and board on the table for breadmaking.*

CHILD. What is it you are going to make, Mother?

MOTHER. I am going to make a grand cake with white flour. Seeds I will put in it. Maybe I'll make a little cake for yourself too. You can be baking it in the little pot while the big one will be baking in the big pot.

CHILD. It is a pity daddy to be away at the fair on a Samhain night.

MOTHER. I must make my feast all the same, for Samhain night is more to me than to any other one. It was on this night seven years I first came into this house.

CHILD. You will be taking down those plates from the dresser so, those plates with flowers on them, and be putting them on the table.

MOTHER. I will. I will set out the house to-day, and bring

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down the best delf, and put whatever thing is best on the table, because of the great thing that happened me seven years ago.

CHILD. What great thing was that?

MOTHER. I was after being driven out of the house where I was a serving girl. . . .

CHILD. Where was that house? Tell me about it.

MOTHER [*sitting down and pointing southward*]. It is over there I was living, in a farmer's house up on Slieve Echtge, near to Slieve na n-Or, the Golden Mountain.

CHILD. The Golden Mountain! That must be a grand place.

MOTHER. Not very grand indeed, but bare and cold enough at that time of the year. Anyway, I was driven out a Samhain day like this, because of some things that were said against me.

CHILD. What did you do then?

MOTHER. What had I to do but to go walking the bare bog road through the rough hills where there was no shelter to find, and the sharp wind going through me, and the red mud heavy on my shoes. I came to Kilbecanty. . . .

CHILD. I know Kilbecanty. That is where the woman in the shop gave me sweets out of a bottle.

MOTHER. So she might now, but that night her door was shut and all the doors were shut; and I saw through the windows the boys and the girls sitting round the hearth and playing their games, and I had no courage to ask for shelter. In dread I was they might think some shameful thing of me, and I going the road alone in the night-time.

CHILD. Did you come here after that?

MOTHER. I went on down the hill in the darkness, and with the dint of my trouble and the length of the road my strength failed me, and I had like to fall. So I did fall at the last, meeting with a heap of broken stones by the roadside.



CHILD. I hurt my knee one time I fell on the stones.

MOTHER. It was then the great thing happened. I saw a stranger coming towards me, a very tall man, the best I ever saw, bright and shining that you could see him through the darkness; and I knew him to be no common man.

CHILD. Who was he?

MOTHER. It is what I thought, that he was the King of the World.

CHILD. Had he a crown like a King?

MOTHER. If he had, it was made of the twigs of a bare blackthorn; but in his hand he had a green branch, that never grew on a tree of this world. He took me by the hand, and he led me over the stepping-stones outside to this door, and he bade me to go in and I would find good shelter. I was kneeling down to thank him, but he raised me up and he said, "I will come to see you some other time. And do not shut up your heart in the things I give you," he said, "but have a welcome before me."

CHILD. Did he go away then?

MOTHER. I saw him no more after that, but I did as he bade me. [*She stands up and goes to the door.*] I came in like this, and your father was sitting there by the hearth, a lonely man that was after losing his wife. He was alone and I was alone, and we married one another; and I never wanted since for shelter or safety. And a good wife I made him, and a good housekeeper.

CHILD. Will the King come again to the house?

MOTHER. I have his word for it he will come, but he did not come yet; it is often your father and myself looked out the door of a Samhain<sup>1</sup> night, thinking to see him.

<sup>1</sup> A Celtic feast of the departing sun or summer, held November 1, the beginning of the Celtic year. Omens were read for the future, and ghosts and bogies were believed to be abroad.—Webster's *New International Dictionary*.

CHILD. I hope he won't come in the night-time, and I asleep.

MOTHER. It is of him I do be thinking every year, and I setting out the house, and making a cake for the supper.

CHILD. What will he do when he comes in?

MOTHER. He will sit over there in the chair, and maybe he will taste a bit of the cake. I will call in all the neighbours; I will tell them he is here. They will not be keeping it in their mind against me then that I brought nothing, coming to the house. They will know I am before any of them, the time they know who it is has come to visit me. They will all kneel down and ask for his blessing. But the best blessing will be on the house he came to of himself.

CHILD. And are you going to make the cake now?

MOTHER. I must make it now indeed, or I will be late with it. I am late as it is; I was expecting one of the neighbours to bring me white flour from the town. I'll wait no longer, I'll go borrow it in some place. There will be a wedding in the stonecutter's house Thursday, it's likely there will be flour in the house.

CHILD. Let me go along with you.

MOTHER. It is best for you to stop here. Be a good child now, and don't be meddling with the things on the table. Sit down there by the hearth and break up those little sticks I am after bringing in. Make a little heap of them now before me, and we will make a good fire to bake the cake. See now how many will you break. Don't go out the door while I'm away, I would be in dread of you going near the river and it in flood. Behave yourself well now. Be counting the sticks as you break them.

*[She goes out.]*

CHILD *[sitting down and breaking sticks across his knee].*

One — and two — O I can break this one into a great many, one, two, three, four. — This one is wet — I don't like a wet one — five, six — that is a great heap. —

Let me try that great big one. — That is too hard. — I don't think mother could break that one. — Daddy could break it.

*[Half-door is opened and a travelling man comes in.*

*He wears a ragged white flannel shirt, and mud-stained trousers. He is bareheaded and barefooted, and carries a little branch in his hand.]*

TRAVELLING MAN *[stooping over the child and taking the stick]*.

Give it here to me and hold this.

*[He puts the branch in the child's hand while he takes the stick and breaks it.]*

CHILD. That is a good branch, apples on it and flowers.

The tree at the mill has apples yet, but all the flowers are gone. Where did you get this branch?

TRAVELLING MAN. I got it in a garden a long way off.

CHILD. Where is the garden? Where do you come from?

TRAVELLING MAN *[pointing southward]*. I have come from beyond those hills.

CHILD. Is it from the Golden Mountain you are come?  
From Slieve na n-Or?

TRAVELLING MAN. That is where I come from surely, from the Golden Mountain. I would like to sit down and rest for a while.

CHILD. Sit down here beside me. We must not go near the table or touch anything, or mother will be angry.

Mother is going to make a beautiful cake, a cake that will be fit for a King that might be coming in to our supper.

TRAVELLING MAN. I will sit here with you on the floor.

*[Sits down.]*

CHILD. Tell me now about the Golden Mountain.

TRAVELLING MAN. There is a garden in it, and there is a tree in the garden that has fruit and flowers at the one time.

CHILD. Like this branch?

TRAVELLING MAN. Just like that little branch.

CHILD. What other things are in the garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are birds of all colours that sing at every hour, the way the people will come to their prayers. And there is a high wall about the garden.

CHILD. What way can the people get through the wall?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are four gates in the wall: a gate of gold, and a gate of silver, and a gate of crystal, and a gate of white brass.

CHILD [*taking up the sticks*]. I will make a garden. I will make a wall with these sticks.

TRAVELLING MAN. This big stick will make the first wall.  
[*They build a square wall with sticks.*]

CHILD [*taking up branch*]. I will put this in the middle. This is the tree. I will get something to make it stand up. [*Gets up and looks at dresser.*] I can't reach it. Get up and give me that shining jug.

[*Travelling Man gets up and gives him the jug.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. Here it is for you.

CHILD [*puts it within the walls and sets the branch in it*]. Tell me something else that is in the garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are four wells of water in it, that are as clear as glass.

CHILD. Get me down those cups, those flowery cups, we will put them for wells. [*He hands them down.*] Now I will make the gates, give me those plates for gates, not those ugly ones, those nice ones at the top.

[*He takes them down and they put them on the four sides for gates. The Child gets up and looks at it.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. There now, it is finished.

CHILD. Is it as good as the other garden? How can we go to the Golden Mountain to see the other garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. We can ride to it.

CHILD. But we have no horse.

TRAVELLING MAN. This form will be our horse. [*He draws a form out of the corner, and sits down astride on it, putting*

*the child before him.]* Now, off we go! [*Sings, the child repeating the refrain*] —

Come ride and ride to the garden,  
Come ride and ride with a will:  
For the flower comes with the fruit there  
Beyond a hill and a hill.

*Refrain*

Come ride and ride to the garden,  
Come ride like the March wind;  
There's barley there, and water there,  
And stabling to your mind.

TRAVELLING MAN. How did you like that ride, little horseman?

CHILD. Go on again! I want another ride!

TRAVELLING MAN [*sings*] —

The Archangels stand in a row there  
And all the garden bless,  
The Archangel Axel, Victor the angel  
Work at the cider press.

*Refrain*

Come ride and ride to the garden, &c.

CHILD. We will soon be at the Golden Mountain now.

Ride again. Sing another song.

TRAVELLING MAN [*sings*] —

O scent of the broken apples!  
O shuffling of holy shoes!  
Beyond a hill and a hill there  
In the land that no one knows.

*Refrain*

Come ride and ride to the garden, &c.

CHILD. Now another ride.

TRAVELLING MAN. This will be the last. It will be a good ride.

[*The mother comes in. She stares for a second, then throws down her basket and snatches up the child.*]

MOTHER. Did ever anyone see the like of that! A common beggar, a travelling man off the roads, to be holding the child! To be leaving his ragged arms about him as if he was of his own sort! Get out of that, whoever you are, and quit this house or I'll call to some that will make you quit it.

CHILD. Do not send him out! He is not a bad man; he is a good man; he was playing horses with me. He has grand songs.

MOTHER. Let him get away out of this now, himself and his share of songs. Look at the way he has your bib destroyed that I was after washing in the morning!

CHILD. He was holding me on the horse. We were riding, I might have fallen. He held me.

MOTHER. I give you my word you are done now with riding horses. Let him go on his road. I have no time to be cleaning the place after the like of him.

CHILD. He is tired. Let him stop here till evening.

TRAVELLING MAN. Let me rest here for a while, I have been travelling a long way.

MOTHER. Where did you come from to-day?

TRAVELLING MAN. I came over Slieve Echtge from Slieve na n-Or. I had no house to stop in. I walked the long bog road. The wind was going through me. There was no shelter to be got. The red mud of the road was heavy on my feet. I got no welcome in the villages, and so I came on to this place, to the rising of the river at Ballylee.

MOTHER. It is best for you to go on to the town. It is not far for you to go. We will maybe have company coming in here.

*[She pours out flour into a bowl and begins mixing.]*

TRAVELLING MAN. Will you give me a bit of that dough to bring with me? I have gone a long time fasting.

MOTHER. It is not often in the year I make bread like this. There are a few cold potatoes on the dresser, are they not



good enough for you? There is many a one would be glad to get them.

TRAVELLING MAN. Whatever you will give me, I will take it.

MOTHER [*going to the dresser for the potatoes and looking at the shelves*]. What in the earthly world has happened all the delf? Where are the jugs gone and the plates? They were all in it when I went out a while ago.

CHILD [*hanging his head*]. We were making a garden with them. We were making that garden there in the corner.

MOTHER. Is that what you were doing after I bidding you to sit still and to keep yourself quiet? It is to tie you in the chair I will another time! My grand jugs! [*She picks them up and wipes them.*] My plates that I bought the first time I ever went marketing into Gort. The best in the shop they were. [*One slips from her hand and breaks.*] Look at that now, look what you are after doing. [*She gives a slap at the child.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. Do not blame the child. It was I myself took them down from the dresser.

MOTHER [*turning on him*]. It was you took them! What business had you doing that? It's the last time a tramp or a tinker or a rogue of the roads will have a chance of laying his hand on anything in this house. It is jailed you should be! What did you want touching the dresser at all? Is it looking you were for what you could bring away?

TRAVELLING MAN [*taking the child's hands*]. I would not refuse these hands that were held out for them. If it was for the four winds of the world he had asked, I would have put their bridles into these innocent hands.

MOTHER [*taking up the jug and throwing the branch on the floor*]. Get out of this! Get out of this I tell you! There is no shelter here for the like of you! Look at

that mud on the floor! You are not fit to come into the house of any decent respectable person!

[*The room begins to darken.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. Indeed, I am more used to the roads than to the shelter of houses. It is often I have spent the night on the bare hills.

MOTHER. No wonder in that! [*She begins to sweep floor.*]

Go out of this now to whatever company you are best used to, whatever they are. The worst of people it is likely they are, thieves and drunkards and shameless women.

TRAVELLING MAN. Maybe so. Drunkards and thieves and shameless women; stones that have fallen, that are trodden under foot; bodies that are spoiled with sores; bodies that are worn with fasting; minds that are broken with much sinning; the poor, the mad, the bad. . . .

MOTHER. Get out with you! Go back to your friends, I say!

TRAVELLING MAN. I will go. I will go back to the high road that is walked by the bare feet of the poor, by the innocent bare feet of children. I will go back to the rocks and the wind, to the cries of the trees in the storm!

[*He goes out.*]

CHILD. He has forgotten his branch!

[*Takes it and follows him.*]

MOTHER [*still sweeping*]. My good plates from the dresser, and dirty red mud on the floor, and the sticks all scattered in every place. [*Stoops to pick them up.*] Where is the child gone? [*Goes to door.*] I don't see him — he couldn't have gone to the river — it is getting dark — the bank is slippery. Come back! Come back! Where are you?

[*Child runs in.*]

MOTHER. O where were you? I was in dread it was to the river you were gone, or into the river.

CHILD. I went after him. He is gone over the river.

MOTHER. He couldn't do that. He couldn't go through the flood.

CHILD. He did go over it. He was as if walking on the water. There was a light before his feet.

MOTHER. That could not be so. What put that thought in your mind?

CHILD. I called to him to come back for the branch, and he turned where he was in the river, and he bade me to bring it back, and to show it to yourself.

MOTHER [*taking the branch*]. There are fruit and flowers on it. It is a branch that is not of any earthly tree. [*Falls on her knees.*] He is gone, he is gone, and I never knew him! He was that stranger that gave me all! He is the King of the World!

CURTAIN

# THE SHUTTING O' THE DOOR <sup>1</sup>

BY WALLACE G. DICKSON

## CHARACTERS

MARGARET

JAN

THE FOOL

THE FIRST THIEF

THE SECOND THIEF

SCENE: *An old English cottage in the woods. The beams of the walls and ceiling are black with the smoke of countless years. There is a big casement window at the back. Through it can be seen the shadows of great trees waving in the night wind. At the right of the window is a door opening to the woods. In the right wall is a huge fireplace. Over the brisk fire, hanging from a swinging crane, is a big black kettle. There is a table in the center toward the left. It has a red cover. There are warm, red curtains at the window. In the left corner of the room is a kitchen cupboard. An old settle is warming itself by the fireplace. A fat tallow candle sputters in an iron candlestick on the table.*

[*As the curtain rises Margaret is kneeling by the fireplace. Deftly she swings the kettle toward her and with a big wooden spoon she stirs the porridge. She swings the kettle back over the fire to keep it warm. Humming a*

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*dainty tune she gets dishes from the cupboard and sets the table for two. From a stone jug by the fireplace she pours Jan a mug of steaming ale. There is bread on the table. She looks about to see that all is ready. There comes a heavy thump of boots outside. With a mischievous smile she glances about in search of a hiding-place. Just as the door opens she skips behind it. It opens inward and so conceals her. Jan stands on the doorsill looking about the room for Margaret. With a smile he stoops to see whether she is under the table. She is not. Leaving the door open he moves into the room. He is absorbed in thinking where she might be. On tiptoes she steals out from behind the door and with a delicious little laugh claps her hands over his eyes.]*

MARGARET. Guess who!

JAN [*as though he did not know*]. Gran'ma Neville?

MARGARET. No!

JAN. Sally?

MARGARET [*scornfully*]. No-o.

JAN [*triumphantly*]. The queen!

MARGARET. Guess again.

JAN. *My* queen?

MARGARET. Um-hum. [*She looks down as he swings about and places his hands on her shoulders.*] Your queen, Jan.

JAN. Gi'e me a kiss, lass.

MARGARET [*kisses the first two fingers of her right hand and presses them to his lips*]. 'Tis all the kisses you'll get from me, Jan Tindle.

JAN. An' who else'll I kiss, sweet Margaret?

MARGARET [*with a saucy flirt of her head*]. 'Tis for yerself to decide who ye'll kiss, not me.

JAN. Mayhap. [*With a sly glance.*] How's that Sally Lawless, the plump wench as tends the kegs down at the Golden Flagon? She's nice.

MARGARET [*with another flirt of her head*]. Hush! Don't talk to me o' that Sally Lawless. Ev'ry tippled Jack in the south country's kissed her.

[*She crosses to the fireplace and swings the kettle into the room.*]

JAN. Except yer own dear Jan. Think I'd kiss any but you? Nay, lass, I did but jest. [*He reaches into one of the pockets of his jerkin.*] Come over, pretty one.

MARGARET. An' what do yer want wi' me?

JAN. Come an' I'll be showin' ye.

MARGARET. Then make haste, the porridge cools.

[*She crosses to him.*]

JAN. Close yer eyes an' put out yer han's.

MARGARET. I'll do nothin' o' the sort.

JAN [*insisting*]. Close yer eyes an' put out yer han's.

MARGARET. Well, if ye reely got somethin' fer me . . .

JAN. Close yer eyes an' put out yer han's.

MARGARET [*she does as he tells her*]. An' don't ye put a frog in 'em, Jan.

JAN. No, I swear not. [*He brings forth a bundle from his pocket and lays it in her hands.*] Now open an' see.

MARGARET [*opening it eagerly*]. What is it, Jan? What is it?  
[*She unrolls a long strip of ribbon, Roman stripe.*]

JAN [*almost proudly*]. An' how does that strike yer fancy?

MARGARET [*jumping up and down with joy*]. Oh, Jan Tindle, yer un angel. [*She drapes the silk across her breast.*] An' now I'll fix the other dress. [*Pause.*] Jan, where did ye get it?

JAN. A peddler at the Golden Flagon had it wi' 'im. He said as it come from Italy, across the sea.

MARGARET. I'll pay you, sweet boy.

[*She skips up to him, and with her arms thrown back, leans forward, her lips touching his.*]

JAN [*suddenly*]. I'd gi'e ye the world fer that, Margaret.  
[*There is a pause.*]



MARGARET [*coming down to earth*]. I'll fix the other dress an' we'll go to church, Jan.

JAN. We will that, on the Sabbath. But to-night let's eat.

MARGARET. I'll get the porridge.

*[She places the silk in a safe place and starts to fill two bowls with porridge. Jan loosens the leather belt at his waist and sinks on to the settle by the fire. He stretches out his legs comfortably. As Margaret fills the bowls he leans forward and sniffs.]*

JAN. Smells good.

MARGARET. It is good. I made it from the new meal ye brought me from Jock's mill.

JAN [*leaning back and folding his hands behind his head*]. Speakin' o' Jock. He was down to the Golden Flagon Inn to-night, an' he wagered as he could split the door wi' 'is head.

MARGARET [*astounded*]. Wi' 'is head?

JAN [*nodding seriously*]. Wi' 'is head. Well, the rest o' us took 'im on.

*[Margaret has turned to put the porridge on the table. The open door catches her eye. She looks from Jan to the door and then says, rather severely.]*

MARGARET. Jan!

JAN [*startled into sitting upright*]. Huh?

MARGARET. Ye stupid lout, get up an' close the door. Here ye got my nice warm kitchen all cold wi' yer carelessness.

JAN [*a bit nettled*]. Stupid lout! Is that the way ye call yer nice, kind husband as loves ye? Stupid lout! Ask me right. *[He settles back.]*

MARGARET. Are ye not a lout to leave a door open in chill October?

JAN. W'ich ain't the point. Ye called me once.

MARGARET [*almost angrily*]. Jan, will ye close that door?

JAN [*flatly*]. No. If ye'd asked me right.

[*He stops with the air of "Things might have been different."*]

MARGARET. Then ye'll not get a taste o' my porridge this night.

JAN [*looking over his shoulder at her*]. Yer porridge. An' how is it yer porridge?

MARGARET. Did I not cook it?

JAN [*cunningly*]. Cook what?

MARGARET. The meal.

JAN [*triumphantly*]. Whose meal? Whose meal did ye cook? [*After the way of a woman Margaret will not answer. Then after a moment.*] Well, I wouldn't eat it anyway. [*He settles back.*] Prob'ly there's poison in it. [*Margaret closes her mouth tightly to hold back the words. She will not look at him. Jan sulkily wagging his head.*] An' why don't you close it? [*He gets a bit uncomfortable under her silence.*] Well, I won't. [*There is a long pause. Then looking 'round at her.*] Why don't ye say somethin'? [*He waits for a response. There is none forthcoming. Margaret merely closes her mouth tighter. Then after a pause.*] I ken keep still as well as you ken. [*He turns his gaze back to the fire. There is silence. Then turning toward her.*] An' the first one that speaks after this'll shut the door?

[*Margaret nods. Jan turns back to the fire. Margaret sits in a chair by the table. One can see that it is going to be a long, hard struggle. After a time the dim figure of the Fool approaches the door. There is a feeble knock. Jan opens his mouth to say, "Come in." Remembering the door he snaps his mouth shut and beckons the man in. Margaret leans from her chair to watch the Fool as he sidles in, crabwise. He stands looking*

*about the room for several minutes. Then he sees the buttons on Jan's jacket. Carefully laying a forefinger on each he counts them off in a dull monotone. Then he glances down the buttons of his own jerkin and begins counting them; the number does not correspond with the number of Jan's buttons and the Fool is greatly troubled. Cocking his head from one side to the other he stares at the buttons. Then he counts his own again. By skipping a button he makes the number of his buttons the same as that of Jan. This pleases him very much and he is all smiles.]*

**THE FOOL.** *Hah! Hah! [There seems to come an echo from the woods and the Fool spins about. For a moment he listens, then, convinced there is no one there, he turns to Jan, shaking his head. Jan shakes his head also.] What is? [Jan shakes his head, smiling good-humoredly. The Fool, catching sight of the bread on the table, looks into Jan's face and then points to the bread.] Bread? [Jan nods and the Fool moves across to the table. He seizes a slice and takes a huge bite. As he stands there munching he sees Jan's mug of ale, and before either Jan or Margaret can make a move he has drained the mug. He smacks his lips. Margaret starts forward with a frown and then sinks back into the chair. She shrugs her shoulders, as though, after all, it didn't matter. Catching up two more slices the Fool crosses the room to Jan. He tries to cram a slice into Jan's mouth.] Bread! Bread! [Jan takes it from his mouth and throws it into the fire. He shakes his head. Imitatively the Fool does likewise. Suddenly he seems stricken with thought. He reaches into his girdle and after a moment brings forth an immense copper penny. This he bestows on Jan with a gracious air and then he turns to go. Jan, however, catches him by the sleeve and returns the penny. He shakes his head. The Fool raises his eye-*

brows in surprise. *He looks from Jan to the penny and back.*] Cookoo!

*[Shaking his head he goes out the door, still munching bread. At almost the same moment there comes a faint "Halloo." It is repeated and a little later there is the sound of boots on wood. Then two Thieves bent almost double under the weight of two sacks stagger into the room. With a thud they drop the sacks to the floor. The First Thief gives a huge sigh of relief and mops his forehead with a kerchief. The other stands fighting for breath.]*

THE FIRST THIEF *[who is tall and lean]*. Whew! I be all of a-sweat wi' the heft o' that sack o' sil'er.

*[He looks apologetically from Jan to Margaret.]*

THE SECOND THIEF *[who is short and chubby]*. An' so be I wi' my sack o' gold. *[He also mops his forehead.]* Whew! This thievin' do be a turrible business as to work. Especial for them as isn't us't to 't.

THE FIRST THIEF *[groaning]*. Aye, it do be that. What wi' my back achin' an' my belly hollered till I ain't got any, I do be in a pretty way.

THE SECOND THIEF. Sit ye down an' rest yer back. We'll toast 'r toes an' fill us up wi' ale an' a slab o' green cheese an' dream as we was captings on a pirate ship. Here ye, master o' the house, an' do 'e say to gi'e us a bite o' sup an' a bed.

*[Jan, by reason of the door, can say not a word. He merely stares at them.]*

THE FIRST THIEF. A bed wi' cov'rin's an' all.

THE SECOND THIEF. An' a leg o' capon an' a swig o' ale as big as a mounting. W'ot say 'e?

*[Jan looks distressed. The First Thief nudges the Second.]*

THE FIRST THIEF. He bean't speakin' free.

THE SECOND THIEF [*grunting*]. He bean't that. [*To Jan.*]

Come, we'll gi'e ye two shillin's all.

THE FIRST THIEF. An' a right good price, too.

THE SECOND THIEF. An' a penny for luck. Speak up!

[*Jan simply stares at them. For a moment they endure his gaze, then drop their eyes. The First Thief nudges the Second again.*]

THE FIRST THIEF. W'ot is he, huh?

THE SECOND THIEF. I bean't sure. Do it be i' us to try the 'oman?

THE FIRST THIEF. Aye. You try 'er.

THE SECOND THIEF. [*He crosses to Margaret. He sweeps off his cap and fumbles it nervously in his hands. It would appear that he is not a ladies' man.*] A very fine night it is, medame. [*For an instant Margaret looks him in the eye. She smiles. He expands.*] A royal fine night. [*She smiles again.*] A night as were fit for a king. [*He waits for her to speak. When she does not he becomes embarrassed.*] Er — a — we be two poor travelers as is tired an' hungry, what wi' robbin' all day, an' a fight, an' luggin' a sack o' gold an' a sack o' sil'er, an' we be tired an' wishful o' a snack an' a bed, an' bein' tired we 'ud like to rest us-selves, an' — an' . . .

[*He is all tangled up. Here the other chimes in.*]

THE FIRST THIEF. An' we was wond'rin' as could ye put us i' the loft wi' a spare cov'rin' an' a bite o' cheese or some'at.

[*He waits for her to answer. She looks at them both and smiles. He looks at the other Thief.*]

THE SECOND THIEF [*gulping*]. We was wond'rin' could we . . .

[*Margaret smiles and shakes her head. She points to Jan.*]

THE FIRST THIEF [*pointing over his shoulder with his thumb*]. She says him.

[*With a single movement they cross to Jan who greets them with a scowl.*]

THE SECOND THIEF. As man to man we want to know ken we roost i' the coop wi' a jug o' ale?

[*Jan scowls at them for answer. They look at each other and shake their heads, beginning to be a bit afraid of the complete silence of Jan and Margaret.*]

THE FIRST THIEF. Stick me i' the throat, but I don't like this.

THE SECOND THIEF. Or-r I either. They's some'at queer, both o' 'em.

THE FIRST THIEF. Them as wun't say a word w'en they got tongues . . .

[*He taps his head significantly.*]

THE SECOND THIEF. Righto! Howsoever, here be a bit o' bread an' a jug o' ale. I be thet famished as I ken't keep my legs up no longer.

[*He staggers across to a bench and drops on to it.*

*From the table he seizes a slice of bread. The other pours out two mugs of ale. They sit on the bench side by side. Jan watches them gloweringly while Margaret divides her attention between them and Jan. The Thieves look straight in front of them all the time. There is a complete silence. Once Jan shifts a foot and they jump like startled deer. Under the genial influence of the warmth and the ale they begin to expand. The First Thief opens the neck of his jerkin. The other loosens his belt, shifts to a more comfortable position and lets his gaze wander over the room.*]

THE FIRST THIEF. Good ale.

[*The Second Thief grunts his reply. He drains his mug and pours himself another. He stands up, patting his forehead. Then he thumps his chest.*]

THE SECOND THIEF [*blowing*]. Ooo! What wi' this ale i' me I feel as 'o' I could cope wi' a lion.

THE FIRST THIEF. Bring on yer animuls. [*Pause.*] I tell



you w'ot we'll do. They don't seem ower lovin' here an' it 'ud be best fer to move on.

THE SECOND THIEF. Befer we go, I gotta kiss the lass, here.

THE FIRST THIEF. W'ot'll I do?

THE SECOND THIEF. Shave the hair off the head o' the man yonder.

THE FIRST THIEF. An' what 'ull we do fer water? There bean't no hot.

THE SECOND THIEF. Shave him wi' the porridge.

THE FIRST THIEF. W'ot then fer a knife?

THE SECOND THIEF. Use the dagger as ye have i' yer belt.

THE FIRST THIEF. So be't.

*[He walks carefully around Jan and reaches for the kettle of porridge. As he does so Jan lets out a fierce yell. He seizes Thief number one by the collar and swings him to the middle of the room. He catches the other and holding them both by their necks cracks their heads together sharply.]*

JAN. W'ot! Will ye scald me wi' my own porridge and kiss my wife befer my eyes, ye crawlin' scallywags? *[The Thieves let out yelps as he cracks their heads together again.]* Get out o' here, an' if I ketch the pair o' ye i' these woods again, curse me if I don't lash ye till ye die. *[He releases them and they shoot through the door as though pursued by Old Nick himself. Jan watches them go. Then he sighs and turns back into the room. His eyes light on the sacks of gold and silver. He cries out excitedly.]* Look, lass, look! A thousand p'unds, anyway!

MARGARET. Jan Tindle, ye spoke first! Now go an' shut the door.

*[Jan grins sheepishly and starts for the door as the curtain falls and the play is ended.]*

CURTAIN



# THE WRAGGLE-TAGGLE GYPSIES<sup>1</sup>

BY BOYS OF THE PERSE SCHOOL

## PERSONS IN THE PLAY

THE LORD OF THE CASTLE

THE LADY

OSWALD, *the Steward*

THE GREEN MAN [*Robin*], *a Forester*

GYPSY MAN

GYPSY WOMAN

PETER, *another Gypsy*

SCENE I. *Sunset. The Lady's Bower*

*A jangling of keys heard. Oswald comes in, ushering the Lady.*

LADY. How comes it that my door was locked?

OSWALD. I thought, my Lady, there being unwonted guests about, 'twould be better to restrict access to your room.

LADY. Your zeal outdoes your wisdom, Oswald. [*Oswald still lingers round the door.*] Thank you: I will not keep you longer from more urgent duties.

OSWALD. By your leave, my Lady, I will renew the rushes on the floor. They are somewhat stale, I believe.

LADY. There is no need. [*Sits down.*]

OSWALD. The tapestry's awry. Besides, my Lord strictly enjoined me to keep your room as fair as might be.

*[The Lady ignores him, and sits thinking with her*

<sup>1</sup> By members of the Sixth Form of the Perse School, Cambridge, England. From *Perse Playbooks*, No. 3. Reprinted by courtesy of Dr. W. H. D. Rouse, Headmaster. Correspondence in regard to performances should be addressed to Hanson Hart Webster, 2 Park Street, Boston.

*chin resting on her hand. Oswald fiddles about, anxious to begin a conversation. Hems and haws.]*

OSWALD. Ahem! They are making merry down in the hall now, my Lady.

LADY. Ah!

OSWALD. His Reverence the Abbot finds my Lord's Malvoisie much to his taste, my Lady.

LADY. Ah!

OSWALD. By chance, my Lady, you have heard the latest rumour about him and the Lady Jane? Only a silly tale, of course, my Lady. [*No answer.*] Ahem! by chance, my Lady, you have heard the — [*Clapping heard from below.*] My Lord summons me. I crave your leave to go, my Lady.

*[Bows. No answer; bows again and withdraws.]*

LADY. Thank goodness I am rid of that officious fool. [*Gets up and looks out of the window. Steps heard on the stairs as she sits down again.*] Dear me, here comes the meddling fellow back again!

*[Enter Oswald.]*

OSWALD. My Lady! [*No answer.*] Ahem! my Lady!

LADY. Well?

OSWALD. My Lord requests your presence in the hall, my Lady.

LADY. Tell him that I am ill and cannot come.

OSWALD. But, my Lady —

LADY. I am unwell and cannot come. [*Exit Oswald.*] Will this fellow never cease to plague me?

*[A pause. Heavier steps are heard on the stairs, and the Lord enters.]*

LORD. What's this? The moody fit again upon you? Come now, be reasonable. My guests crave your presence at the board.

LADY. I sent Oswald with the message that I was ill and could not come.

LORD. Unwell! pooh! pooh! Nothing worse ails you than a heaviness that comes of this brooding by yourself. The merry-making in the hall will cheer you. [*He takes her arm.*] Now, come with me.

LADY. Oh, no! I haven't the heart to sit in a stifling hall and hear coarse tales and aimless talk, nor breathe wine-tainted air, when I can hear the cool evening wind stirring the poplars at the gate. [*She gets up and goes to the window.*] How can you take delight in such low, sordid things when the sun behind the pines is weltering in such a gorgeous sea of colour?

LORD [*staring*]. Good Heavens! what ails you? One might take you for a natural. I think there really must be something in what they say about the moon influencing men's minds. It is at the full to-night. And you are unusually — er — well, strange.

[*She does not answer but stands gazing out of the window.*]

LORD [*becoming indignant*]. Look here, I've had about enough of this. It isn't fair towards me. It is as much as to reproach me with being an unkind husband, and we not wedded three full months.

LADY. No, no, don't say that.

LORD. But I do say it. I promised to make you a happy wife, and I have done my best to keep my word. You have a fair castle — a better is not built in the countryside — fine rooms, hung with rare tapestry that generations of my forefathers have treasured as a priceless heirloom — secluded bowers where you can sit over your embroidery, a dappled pony, and besides, a husband's love and service. What else can I give to you to make you happy?

LADY. No, it is not that. You cannot give me anything.

LORD. Then, what *is* the matter?

LADY. O, I am tired of being shut up here, of working gaudy trifles within four grey walls.

LORD. But you have already, since our wedding, made four visits to our neighbours; let me see, to Sir Harry's, to Sir —

LADY. It's not that I mean.

LORD [*getting angry*]. Then what *do* you mean?

LADY. What's the use of telling you? I've told you twenty times before. I want to breathe the open-air and live; I want to run wild upon the moors, and walk barefoot in the dew; to watch the skylark drop, and track him to his nest; see the great herons sail to the lowlands; follow tinkling brooks to where they bubble forth, cool and clear among the rocks; dance through the dark, sweet-smelling pinewoods; trample down underfoot the breast-high bracken, and get lost in fairy-haunted glens; and then give way to happy weariness in the wanton heather under the twinkling stars, and rise again with the sun to —

LORD. Why, this is madness.

LADY. Oh, I am sick of working embroidery in a bower; of banquetting in unwholesome halls; of all the dull futility of this. [*Spreading out her hands.*]

LORD [*shouting and stamping his foot*]. Oh, I have no patience with you . . . Stay and sulk then!

[*Ramps out.*]

LADY [*calling after him*]. Some day, when the feeling comes strong upon me, you will find my finery upon the floor, and me gone, yes, gone! [*Stays looking out of window.*] He means well; there isn't a better husband in the land. And yet he does not understand me, and he never will. The thought is appalling. A year of this I verily believe will grey my hair, and leave my eyes as soulless and unseeing as those of a prisoner immured for years in a dark

cell underground. What a shattered dream my wedding is! When my duty was to sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam, and learn to be a well-bred lady; when I saw Edward and Hal go out a-hawking and heard them tell of their exploits in the woods and on the moors, I would comfort myself with the thought of wedding some kindred spirit who should understand me. Then what dreams of happiness! But it was fairy gold, a glamour misty and unstable, and 'tis gone, gone. And I have not words or thoughts to tell my feeling — that yearning — [*her voice sinks to a murmur as she looks far away out of the window*] — the sun's gone — the dark pines in the after-glow — a mystic fairyland behind them — beads, embroidery and bower — wind in the poplars — stars in still pools.

*[Gypsy song floats in. She starts up, and stands listening as if spell-bound.]*

A mist came out of the lake to-night,  
When the woods were still and the winds were low,  
It hid my true love out of my sight,  
And its breath was cold as the winter snow.

I found my love in the morning light,  
When the woods were still and the winds were low,  
But her eyes were shut and her face was white,  
And her breast was cold as the winter snow.

So now I pass where the day is bright —  
But the woods are still and the winds are low,  
And I sing no longer by day or night,  
For my heart is cold as the winter snow.

*[Song stops. She slips off her shoes, rings, etc., and steals out as the curtain falls. The curtain opens a moment later and the Lord's step is heard on the stairs.]*

LORD. I fear I was harsh to you. I did not mean it; so come down to please me. I shall not be happy without

— Halloa! Not here! Where can she be? Oswald, ho, Oswald! Oswald, I say!

[*Enter Oswald.*]

OSWALD. Here, my Lord. What is your will?

LORD. Where is my Lady?

OSWALD. Is she not here, my Lord?

LORD. Can't you see, fool?

OSWALD. If she be not here, my Lord, I know not where she can be.

LORD [*to himself*]. Can it be — she did not mean — my harshness — [*To Oswald.*] Oh, get you gone! But stay.

Who was singing outside a while ago?

OSWALD. Some gypsies, I believe, my Lord, or some such good-for-nothings.

LORD. And where are they now?

OSWALD. They are gone, my Lord.

LORD. Yes, fool; but whither?

OSWALD. They pitch their lodging in the wilds somewhere, my Lord.

LORD. Yes, but where? [*Stamps his foot.*] Wilds, you nincompoop! Come, tell me! How can I find out?

OSWALD. Robin, the forester, came to-day. He sups among your henchmen now. He should know. Shall I —

LORD. Fetch him, man! Come, stir yourself! By heavens, if you don't — [*Exit Oswald precipitately. Looking round room.*] Shoes! rings! great God, it must be true — my senseless outburst —

[*Green Man strides in, followed by Oswald.*]

GREEN MAN. What is your will, my Lord?

LORD. Those gypsies that were singing at the gate; which way will they have gone?

GREEN MAN. I cannot say for sure; let me see —

LORD. Yes, yes; but which way are they likely to have gone?

GREEN MAN [*stepping to the window*]. The night is clear and still. We may see some signs of them. [*Puts his hand above his eyes and scans the country. Lord looks eagerly over his shoulder.*] Yes, look! Smoke beyond Blackscar and slightly to the north! [*Indicates right with his hand.*] Don't you see? Among the pines.

LORD. Yes, yes, I see. And what's the nearest way?

GREEN MAN. Well, the stream that leaps the force below Blackscar bends southward [*indicates left*], and, as you know, curves this way again, and passes just behind the castle.

LORD. Oh, yes, I know the way as far as the Boiling Force. But when you get there, what next?

GREEN MAN. The way seems then to end among the stones, and the only path winds round to the left and turns almost back again under the Brant; you know the ledge, it's dangerous —

LORD. An instant — Oswald! Oh, here you are; get me my horse saddled, the white one, and quickly, too.

GREEN MAN. But if you keep straight on, you'll come to the track again among the pines, and there you'll find the gypsies, or I'm no forester.

LORD [*seeing Oswald*]. Is my horse ready?

OSWALD. No, my Lord, I was waiting to ask —

LORD [*pushing him roughly out of the way*]. Life and death, fool; get out of my way! My horse, quick! my horse!

#### CURTAIN

#### SCENE II. *The Gypsy Camp*

GYPSY WOMAN. Hark! What's that? I heard a stone roll down from the rock that overhangs the Boiling Force. Listen! it's clattering down the Brant, and plunk! it goes into the whirlpool.



PETER. Pshaw! T' rain 'as loost t' steans and every breath o' wind sends one abeancin' dean amun t' rocks.

GYPSY WOMAN. But there's scarce a breath of wind to-night.

PETER. Oh, they dhroppen o' their own seln. I've yarn a dozen fa' sith sundean ef ave yarn one.

GYPSY WOMAN. There is a power of water coming down to-day. At sunset I went up Blackscar, as they call the rock that overhangs the force, and leant out over the Brant. The black whirlpool at the foot was seething like a cauldron, fringed with white foam. At the outlet, not six foot wide, the black was altogether hidden in white. The spray hit my face. You can even hear the thunder from here, though faintly. I got dizzy watching the water swirl, and when — What's that? I heard a twig crack.

PETER. Oh, a weasel, nowt bura weasel. But — Halloa! Who're you? [*Enter Lady.*] And where are yer shoen? You'll have had a rough passage o'er t' steanes, an' t' grass is none too warm. Coom an' sit thee dean by 't fire.

LADY. Thank you.

PETER. Mind t'cindhers! Thee'st know it, ef thee threaden on one wi' yer bare feet.

[*Gypsy Woman stares resentfully; Gypsy Man glances curiously.*]

GYPSY WOMAN. What do you want, woman?

PETER [*in audible whisper*]. Sh! oo's a liddy. Ilk a fool cud a tow'd that.

GYPSY WOMAN [*aloud*]. You're right, Peter; that is just what a fool would see. But if you weren't a fool you would see that a lady wouldn't be wandering about alone in such a spot, and at such a time, let alone without shoes. A moonstruck wench, the village natural, I should say.

PETER. Sh! Woman. Howd thy nise.

LADY [*embarrassed*]. I — I thought gypsies didn't wear shoes.

GYPSY WOMAN. They don't when they can't get them. But what's that to do with you?

LADY. I want to come and join you.

GYPSY WOMAN. You want to come and join us! Then that settles it; you are mad.

PETER. Howd yer tongue, you jealous owd vixen. Durnut cast her affliction i' 'er face. Oo connut 'elp it, poor lass.

GYPSY WOMAN. What! I jealous! Jealous of that half-witted hussy! Jealous of that barefoot brazen wench! I'd as soon be jealous of —

GYPSY MAN. That's enough, woman. [*She subsides.*]

PETER. Her tongue wer allus a scorpion's nest. Stir it, and a swarm o' stinging things come abuzzin' abeat yer lugs.

GYPSY MAN. Then don't poke the nest again. [*Peter subsides in turn.*] Are you hungry, lady?

LADY. I thank you, but I am not hungry, friend.

GYPSY MAN. The air nips sharp to-night.

LADY. Yes. But better cold and fresh under the open sky than warm and tainted within four grey walls.

GYPSY MAN. Ah! I never slept between walls but once and they were close enough together.

LADY. And when was that?

GYPSY MAN. When they locked me up for a sturdy beggar. Old Sir John Lucy — they brought me up before him — roared when I denied I was a beggar, "Do you gainsay me, dog? Do you give me the lie, you scurvy villain? Do you think I cannot tell a lousy knave when I see him? Lock him up, jailors! The hangman shall crop his ears, to-morrow." Then he lurched off to finish his carousing, and drown the other half of his wits in a stoup of Malm-

sey. They mewed me up in a dark loathsome cell, along with a dozen other wretches, sweaty from the road, and foul from long immurement. I spent the night in the filthy den — ugh! I can taste the thick foul air now.

[Spits.]

LADY. And did they — clip your ears?

[Gypsy Man shows his ears.]

GYPSY MAN [*musings*]. Sir John died a short time afterwards. Some say it was of a surfeit, but they boiled his steward in oil for a poisoner. [*She glances at him as if struck by some disconcerting thought; but he remains unmoved and she turns away satisfied.*] But above all, I remember the horror of being pent up. I, who was wont to dwell in heaths and wildernesses, and to sleep under the bare sky, and to breathe the free air of open spaces, went well-nigh mad to find myself hemmed in by walls. I scarce could withhold myself from dashing against the window-bars like a new-caged bird.

LADY [*earnestly*]. Oh, then you know what I have felt; the stifling confinement of the hard grey walls that crush the soul. And you know that deep inner yearning which no words can tell; the longing for the air, the pining for life in the wildernesses, where the fresh winds blow unfettered by walls, and the deep star-set blue is the sleeper's only roof; and you understand why, when I heard your gypsy song at sunset beneath my window, I slipped off my golden rings, and doffed my shoes, and stole out to follow in your wake along the white moor-road. You will let me come with you from wood to wood, through moor and dale, and share your fare, and smell the sweet wood-smoke when the sun's gone down.

PETER. Haw, haw, swaet wood-smoak? Haw, haw! Lucky we've pitched aar lodgin' i't woodland. On t' bare moor, where there's scarce a copse for miles, yer a-brunnin' o' dried horse-muck and cattle-dung. Bruns

weel and a', howsome it do gie a flavour to t' broth, o' times, un t' smoak 's none too swate.

GYPSY WOMAN. There'll soon be no fire at all; there's scarce but ashes left. You men will sit there lazing at your ease, and watch the flames sink down to cinders, the red ashes turn white, ere you will stir hand or foot to gather fuel.

*[She gets up to go with the air of a martyr.]*

LADY. Oh, let me go! I will gather fuel and mend the fire.

GYPSY WOMAN. Sit you down. A weakling wench like you couldn't find the wood we want, nor bring it in.

LADY. Oh, yes, I could; just let me try.

PETER. Yer connut go barefoot, lass. Tak 'er shoen.

GYPSY WOMAN. That she won't!

GYPSY MAN. Give her your shoes, woman.

*[Gypsy Woman obeys. Lady goes off.]*

PETER. Poor mad wench. Looks a liddy an' a'. You nyedn't cast her affliction i' 'er face, woman.

GYPSY MAN. She's not mad; no madder than you — which is saying little — no madder than I.

PETER. So, ho! I jist thought as 'ow oo tuk yer fancy; a baint ne'er yeard ye loose yer gab sae free to a sthranger afore.

GYPSY MAN. She is not mad, I say. I own I thought her mad at first; and meant to draw her with idle talk about the weather. But then she broached a subject that draws me like toasted cheese a rat. I forgot I was talking to a stranger wench, a natural; saw only the walls around me; tasted the foul fettered air. And now I know she is not mad; at least, if I'm not. It was merely a pining for the free cool air and the open spaces, that made her steal from her Lord's castle at the beck of our song.

PETER. Her laird'll coom acrapin' afther 'er afoor long a'm

athinkin'. An' t'ud be wie a reet gud lither thong as a'd fot ma lass back ef oo'd a geet it i'er yarb fer't flit.<sup>1</sup>

GYPSY WOMAN. Talk, man, idle talk. But — hark! Three times I thought I heard a stone roll down the Brant, and flounder in the force, in the black whirlpool at the foot — there goes another!

PETER. Thee'rt reet, lass. A've yarn t' plunk as plain as a yar yo spake.

GYPSY WOMAN. Come across here. Through the gap in the trees you can see far along the track. [*Peter and Gypsy Woman step to the back of the stage.*] Look! A horseman riding across Blackscar, across the rock that overhangs the force! You can see the trappings glint in the moonlight.

PETER. Oo's acumin' 'ere sthraight! Oo smells t' smoak o' ar fire.

GYPSY WOMAN. Let's back, that he may find us innocent round the fire.

[*They go back to the fire. Pause; both listen intently.*]

PETER. T' horse has stopped. Theer! Con't yar t' breshwood athrakin'?

GYPSY WOMAN. He is tying his horse to a tree. The brambles are too thick to bring a horse through.

[*Enter Lord. He looks round, wondering whom to address.*]

PETER. Gud neet to thee, measther. Es ther owt as a cun do fer thee?

[*Lord ignores him and addresses Gypsy Man.*]

LORD. Have you seen a woman pass this way? A barefoot woman?

[*Peter whispers to Gypsy Woman.*]

<sup>1</sup> Peter's dialect in the second sentence in this speech is particularly difficult. He probably means to say:—"And it would be with a right good leather thong that I'd have fetched my lass back, if she'd taken it into her head to run away."

LORD. Eh? What's that you say?

PETER. A said as ow t' wer a sthrange place an' a sthrange time o't neet fer't be aseechin' o'a barefoot 'ooman.

[*Lord turns from Peter to Gypsy Man.*]

LORD [*angrily*]. I ask you, have you seen a barefoot woman pass this way?

GYPSY MAN. And I answer as my worthy neighbour there.

LORD. The devil take you! Why can't you give a plain answer? You shuffling gypsy liars can never look a man in the face and answer straightly "Yes" or "No."

GYPSY MAN. Then I'll not try.

LORD. Come, come, man. Do not make me mad. Can't you see that I am moved and short of temper? Come, answer plainly.

[*Peter whispers to Gypsy Woman. Lord turns suddenly round on them.*]

LORD. Eh? What's that?

PETER. Ef a mon connut stir t' fire as 'e's lit bur e mun be murdtherd o' looks et's none sae weel wie 'im.

LORD. Come, come, man, answer. Did a woman, a barefoot woman, follow you from the house down yonder, where you sang beneath the window?

GYPSY MAN. A barefoot woman? I've seen no barefoot woman. Barefoot women are not wont to walk about alone in such a place and at such a time; — ah! I have it! A natural, a poor half-witted wench.

LORD. Have you seen her, then?

GYPSY MAN. Oh, no. I mean to say I understand why she should wander about in such unwonted wise.

LORD. Oh, fool! Oh, dull-brained fool! [*Stamps his foot.*] Moonstruck or not, I want her. You must have seen her, she followed in your wake.

GYPSY MAN. Ah! Now I remember! As we left Black-scar we heard the stones roll down behind us and splash in the water. We all looked round, thinking to see the



forester, Sir Harry's forester, who nosed around us all day long, harmless though we be. You remember, Peter?

PETER. Ay, thot a dun. A cud a broken t' knave 'is yarb wie' my cudgel.

GYPSY MAN. And, as I was saying, we all started and turned round. Nothing saw I and Peter; but the woman swears she saw a figure all in white flit among the stones. At that we crossed ourselves and turned and hastened forward, fearing it was the water wraith, that lures be-lated travellers to their doom in the black bottomless whirlpool at the foot.

LORD. It was she, I swear. And which way went she?

GYPSY MAN. That we cannot tell. For, as I said, we turned our heads away. But she did not come by here, and you have not met her on the track. She must have followed the path that overhangs the force and leads to a ford across the stream. That way is plainer; for the moment there seems no path this way.

LORD [*aghast*]. Along the track that overhangs the force! She cannot, man! In daylight, when the water's low, the way is safe enough. But now, under the dark Brant, when the whirlpool's boiling like the devil's cauldron, and the stream's one mass of foam, to slip is death.

GYPSY MAN. She has not passed this way.

[*Lord turns to rush off.*]

PETER. Wher bee'st agooin, measther?

LORD [*over his shoulder*]. To get my horse.

PETER. Stop! [*Lord stops and turns round.*] Thee's none agooin t' long o' yon threacherous ledge ov a 'orseback?

LORD. I shall find her all the quicker. A minute saved now may be a life. [*Rushing off.*] Heavens! Let me not be a murderer!

PETER [*following and shouting after him*]. Gather thy wits, mon. Ef oo's safe, oo's safe; an' ef oo's dhreant, oo's



dhreant. Yo cudn't save 'er. Geet thee 'ome. Thee'st find 'er theer an grievin' an a'.

GYPSY MAN. Let him go, you fool! Why did you try to stop him, you half-witted knave?

PETER. Bur 'e'll be dhreant as sure as 't day o' doom.

GYPSY MAN. Let him. What's he to us? Couldn't you see that —

[*Lady comes in.*]

LADY. Has he gone? Where has he gone?

GYPSY MAN. Safely home.

LADY. Oh, no. I heard it all. He's gone along the track above the force.

GYPSY MAN. Well?

LADY. He'll be drowned! I heard you say the way was dangerous.

GYPSY MAN. Well?

LADY. I must stop him!

GYPSY MAN. Stop him! And why did you run away from him? Are you so anxious to get back to your bower? Are you so careful for the safety of him from whom you fled but an hour ago? Are you so soon wearied of life in the wilderness and of the free winds of heaven as to yearn already for the shelter of mouldy walls?

PETER. Nae dunnut fret thee, liddy. When t' fresh winds blow agen 'im o't top o' Blackscar, an t' spray o' t' force damps his brow, oo'll cool dean aw reet, thee nyedn't be afeart. Wha, 'is hond's firm an 'is yed's steady.

GYPSY WOMAN. Oh, let her go back to her dear lord. He'll be as glad to have her back to darn his hose as we to —

GYPSY MAN. Hold your tongue, woman.

[*She sits down haughtily.*]

PETER. Yo connut stop 'im nae. Oo's eat o' yarin'.

CURTAIN

& SCENE III. *The Gypsy Camp*

*The Gypsies are lying asleep, and the Lady is trying to kindle a fire.*

PETER [*raising himself on his elbow.*] Hallo! Whot's yon?

LADY. I am trying to kindle a fire. I am chilled through, and the damp of the ground has reached my bones.

PETER. Bust ye, connut a felly sleep for ye? Howsome, I reckon it's time fer t' be stirrin'. [*Sits up, and stirs woman with his foot.*] Nae then, wake up! [*Yawns.*] [*To Lady.*] So thee didstn' sleep o'er wel the neet?

LADY. I could not close my eyes for thinking of — of the cold and damp.

GYPSY WOMAN. Of your dear lord, you mean, my pretty duckling. Wondering whether he was sleeping in his own bed or in the torrent's: eh?

GYPSY MAN. Curb your tongue, woman.

*[The Lady bends over the sticks, and busies herself with kindling the fire.]*

PETER [*getting up*]. Yo connut make a fire thot road, apilin' t' firin' nigh up t' ut moon. Let me show yer.

GYPSY WOMAN [*getting up and peering in the Lady's face*]. Of course the wood won't kindle, if she drenches it with her tears. [*The Lady looks up defiantly.*] There! I told you her eyes were red. [*The Lady disdains to answer.*]

PETER. Yern ud a been red, ef yer'd laid awake aw neet fro' t' cowl. [*Woman laughs derisively.*] Nae theer's a fire for thee. [*Arranges the sticks while he speaks.*] You mind it carefully, un put a twig on nae un agen, ilka bigger un t' last, tell yer cumn to them knotty bronches, as a' snapped fro' t' owd withered ash up yon, as is aswingin' its gnarled owd arms o'er t' force. Et's a totherin' on t' brink awready; coom a gust of a sudden an 'twill send it ahurtlin' o'er t' Brant i' th' whirlpool, to a hend

as more'n ean poor soul has met afore, I'll swar — Hal-loa! What's t' mather nae?

LADY. The smoke got in my eyes. It's out now.

PETER. Nae do as a' sen, yo mind t' fire, whiles a' goo un tak' a look at t' snares. [Goes off.]

GYPSY WOMAN. You leave the fire alone. You'll only put it out with your clumsy fingers. I'll see after that. The best thing you can do is to sit still on that log, where you'll do less harm than elsewhere. [Lady sits down.]

GYPSY MAN [*who has been watching her curiously*]. You look pale, and ill at ease.

LADY. I am faint with cold and hunger. I have not eaten a bite since yesternoon.

GYPSY MAN. Well, we'll see what Peter brings back. Meanwhile, let's to business. Of course you know that gypsies cannot live on air. You must do something for a living if you stay with us. Let me see. You are too old to learn the light-fingered craft that profits most at fairs.

LADY. Don't say that. I will learn anything, if you show me how.

GYPSY MAN. The craft is not one to please you, I fear.

LADY. Oh, yes, I will do anything for the common good.

GYPSY MAN. Well, since you press me, I will expound. 'Tis the art of lightening the pockets of thrifty farmers and stout burghers, by mild persuasion.

LADY. Thieving, you mean! I will never stoop to that. But you are not in earnest.

GYPSY MAN. Do you think we can live on air? But I did not ask you to learn that particular craft. There are other and more delicate ways of loosening purse-strings. Let me see. You have not the smooth and oily tongue to unfold the mysteries of the future to wide-eyed, gaping churls. But you have fingers skilled at embroidery. You shall make beaded shoes to sell at fairs; and saintly relics, pieces of the true cross, and sacred bones, bought

of the paynims in our wanderings in the East, to warm the hearts of the portly brotherhood, and turn the superstitious awe of boors to profit.

LADY. Surely you are jesting with me. I fled from my Lord's bower to escape such trifling tinkering insincerity. What sordid meanness, what unwholesome trifling, what profanity you utter! You cannot mean it!

GYPSY WOMAN. Cannot mean it, indeed! Hark at her! How does she suppose we live? Does she suppose the earth heaps her bounties in our lap, or feeds us like a mother? Does she imagine that folk provide us with the needful things of life for the asking? I know what ails her; she is surfeited of her "life in the wilderness," and pines to go back to her bowers, to her Lord's castle. She may go; we will not hold her back against her will.

LADY. You lie, you bold-faced gypsy-woman!

GYPSY MAN. We will not fall out. Hunger and cold have made us short of temper. Here is Peter. [*Enter Peter.*] What cheer?

PETER. No luck at all; T' wather wraith' I'll swar, or t' ghoosts o' dhreant men 'a witched t' snares. I've never known them a' fer t' fail this way afore.

GYPSY WOMAN. Your clumsy fingers rather, or your dull wits, that would set a snare upon a rock where never hare or rabbit went before. But what's to do?

PETER. So we mun fa' back on t' jannock as t' poor owd woman gave us. [*Fumbles in a sack.*] 'Twas harsh to frighten her like that, an' tak' t' oaf as oo were abaking it th' embers.

GYPSY WOMAN. Fetch it out, man; we cannot wait while you tell the tale again thrice over.

PETER. A' i' good time, shrew — Here it is. [*Brings out a piece of black bread, and breaks it in pieces.*] Hm! Doughy still! Th' owd hag hadn't finished it. Wha didn't oo say as oo adn't? Hm! None much apiece.

I say, woman, you give her yourn! You're used to going wi'eat, bur oo's fresh to our road o' livin.

[*Gypsy Woman draws her piece back indignantly.*]

GYPSY MAN. Do as you're bid, woman!

LADY. I do not want hers, nor mine.

[*Hands her piece back.*]

PETER. What! Dunnut want it! Bur yer said yer were ahungert, and yer look it, an' a'.

LADY. I do not want it now.

GYPSY WOMAN [*sneering*]. Not good enough for her dainty maw! But she'll have to get used to worse than this. May the thought cheer her spirits!

PETER. Hark! Th' steans agin o' Blackscar!

GYPSY WOMAN. I can hear no hoofs. The ring of iron on stone would carry hither. Whoever 't is, comes afoot.

PETER [*rising*]. Let's steal a glance through yon gap.

GYPSY WOMAN. No, no, you fool; sit down. Sir Harry's forester, I'll warrant you; and a forester's no grief-stricken knight a seeking a poor lost lamb. He has eyes as keen as the windhover's.

PETER. Thee'rt reet, lass. He as is acomin' nae is a sight cooler than t' grief-crazed knight as coom a blundherin' throu t' briars yestere'en, i'stead o' by t' thrack, an left mony a flutherin' bit o' rag fer t' bloom ot' thorns, I'll swear, for his hose were tatthered like —

LADY. Grief-crazed! Did you say grief-crazed? You know he was wild with anger and resentment, not with grief. [*Appealing to Gypsy Man.*] Not grief-crazed, was he?

PETER. Grief-crazed, or aut else, 'ere comes t' forester. Quick, hide that skin, lass; car thee dean on't.

[*Enter Green Man.*]

PETER. Hulloo! a forester it is, bur oo's none Sir Harry's. Good morrow, Master Forester: t' day 'as dawned leaden an' a'. [*Lady jumps up with a cry.*]

LADY. Oh, Robin, Robin, I am glad to see you. [*He stands awkwardly and says nothing.*] What, you think me mad? But you may well do so. But we are friends, Robin, old friends. You understand me. Ever since a maid of ten summers, I remember you. You always found a place among my father's henchmen at the board when you were in our neighbourhood. He used to say you were the best forester in the country-side. And then when Edward — you know Edward, my elder brother, was out with his hawks — and Hal who was kind but careless, had left me with a thoughtless gibe that girls are made to sit at home and sew, while men go kill the dinner, and I took my embroidery to my garden bower, you would sometimes tell me quaint lore of the woods and fields and wildernesses; and I, enthralled, would forget my embroidery, and prick my fingers, mayhap. You remember? [*He remains silent, fumbling with his cap. She continues, appealingly:*] You, who spend your life wandering about the country-side, understand why at last I could bear the life no longer; and one evening, when sunset gilded everything — but stay, 'twas but yestereven — there flooded on a sudden through the window, with the sunset breeze, a gypsy song, which melted my heart as snow; and I plucked off my rings and doffed my shoes, and stole out to follow the gypsies. There was magic in the song, that bound as the fastest spell. I had to go. But some potent hand has touched the world now, and turned it all to lead. I am cold and damp with sleeping on the ground; the stale wood-smoke has tainted my clothes, and I have found that gypsies are but mortals. I cannot go with them. My dream is vanished. Take me home with you to my Lord.

GREEN MAN. You ask me what I cannot do, my Lady.

LADY. You cannot? Oh tell me, did my Lord come safely home last night? Selfish as ever, I forgot what first I

should have asked. Your boding look reminds me. Did he come home safe?

GREEN MAN. He came home, my Lady.

LADY. Thank Heavens!

GREEN MAN. Yes, he came home. The torrent carried him down, and we found him at sunrise where the water runs deep and still beside your bower. His horse lies wedged among the boulders yonder.

CURTAIN



# PYRAMUS AND THISBE <sup>1</sup>

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## CHARACTERS

PETER QUINCE, *the Prologue*

PYRAMUS

THISBE

WALL

MOONSHINE

LION

[*Enter Quince, Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion.*]

QUINCE *as Prologue*. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;

But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

[*Crosses to Pyramus.*]

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;

This beauteous lady Thisbe is, certain.

This man with lime and rough-cast, doth present

[*Crossing.*]

Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder:

And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content

To whisper, at the which let no man wonder.

[*Crossing.*]

This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth Moonshine: for, if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

<sup>1</sup> A play contained in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene 1. It is presented by rustic actors at the wedding feast of Theseus and Hippolyta in their palace in Athens.

This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name, [*Crossing.*]  
The trusty Thisbe, coming first by night,  
Did scare away, or rather did affright;  
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain:  
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,

And finds his trusty Thisbe's mantle slain:  
Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;  
And, Thisbe tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,  
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine,  
L., and Pyramus, R.*]

[*Enter Wall, L.*]

WALL. In this same interlude, it doth befall,  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall:  
And such a wall as I would have you think,  
That had in it a cranny'd hole, or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,  
Did whisper often very secretly.  
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone doth show  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

[*Stands in c. of stage.*]

[*Enter Pyramus, R.*]

PYRAMUS. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so  
black!

O night, which ever art when day is not!  
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack!  
I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot!

And thou, O wall! thou sweet and lovely wall!  
 That stands between her father's ground and mine;  
 Thou wall, O wall! O sweet and lovely wall,  
 Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.  
[Wall holds up his fingers.]  
 Thanks, courteous wall; Jove shield thee well for this!  
 But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.  
 O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss;  
 Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

[Enter Thisbe, L.]

THISBE. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,  
 For parting my fair Pyramus and me:  
 My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones;  
 Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,  
 To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face.

Thisbe! [Peeps through Wall's fingers.]

THISBE. My love! thou art my love, I think.

PYRAMUS. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;  
 And like Limander<sup>1</sup> am I trusty still.

THISBE. And I like Helen, till the fates me kill.

PYRAMUS. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBE. As Shafalus to Procrus,<sup>2</sup> I to you.

PYRAMUS. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall.

[They kiss through the fingers of Wall.]

THISBE. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

<sup>1</sup> *Limander, Helen.* A mistake for *Leander* and *Hero*. Leander, the lover of Hero, was a Greek youth of Abydos. He swam the Hellespont every night to visit her in her tower at Sestos. One night during a storm he perished; and Hero, on seeing his dead body washed ashore, threw herself from her tower and was killed.

<sup>2</sup> *Shafalus, Procrus.* A mistake for *Cephalus* and *Procris*. Between these faithful lovers unwarranted jealousy arose. Procris spied upon her husband — Cephalus — and was accidentally killed by him. The story is in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, VII. 660-865.

PYRAMUS. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straight-way?

THISBE. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay!

[*Exit Pyramus, R., Thisbe, L.*]

WALL. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;

And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [*Exit Wall, L.*]

[*Enter Lion and Moonshine, with lantern and dog, L.*]

LION. [*They bow then. Lion takes off his head.*] You, ladies,  
you whose gentle hearts do fear

The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here,

When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar,

Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am

A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam:

For if I should as Lion come in strife

Into this place, 'twere pity on my life. [*Goes up.*]

MOON. All that I have to say is, to tell you, that the lantern  
[*holding it up on a large fork*] is the moon; I, the man  
i' the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this  
dog, my dog.

[*Enter Thisbe, L.*]

THISBE. This is old Ninny's tomb: where is my love?

LION. Oh — [*The Lion roars. Thisbe drops her veil and runs off. The Lion tears Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*]

[*Enter Pyramus, R.*]

PYRAMUS. Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;

I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright;

For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,

I trust to taste of truest Thisbe's sight.

But stay; — O spite!

But mark, — poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?  
 How can it be?  
 O dainty duck! O dear!  
 Thy mantle good.  
 What! stain'd with blood?  
 Approach, ye furies fell!  
 O fates! come, come;  
 Cut thread and thrum;  
 Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!  
 O, wherefore, nature, didst thou lions frame?  
 Since lion vile hath here deflour'd my dear:  
 Which is — no, no — which was the fairest dame,  
 That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.  
 Come, tears, confound  
 Out, sword, and wound  
 The pap of Pyramus:  
 Ay, that left pap,  
 Where heart doth hop: —  
 Thus die I [*stabs himself*], thus, thus, thus.  
 Now am I dead,  
 Now am I fled;  
 My soul is in the sky:  
 Tongue, lose thy light!  
 Moon, take thy flight!  
 Now die, die, die, die, die! [*Dies. Exit Moonshine, L.*]

[*Enter Thisbe.*]

**THISBE.** Asleep, my love!  
 What, dead, my dove!  
 O Pyramus, arise!  
 Speak, speak! Quite dumb  
 Dead, dead? A tomb  
 Must cover thy sweet eyes.  
 These lily brows,  
 This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,  
Are gone, are gone:  
Lovers, make moan!  
His eyes were green as leeks  
O sisters three,  
Come, come to me,  
With hands as pale as milk;  
Lay them in gore,  
Since you have shore  
With shears his thread of silk.  
Tongue, not a word:  
Come, trusty sword;  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:  
[*stabs herself*] And farewell, friends;  
Thus Thisbe ends:  
Adieu, adieu, adieu!

[*Dies.*]

CURTAIN

# MISS BURNEY AT COURT <sup>1</sup>

By MAUDE MORRISON FRANK

## CHARACTERS

FANNY BURNEY, *Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte*

SALLY BURNEY, *her half-sister, a young girl*

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG, *Senior Keeper of the Robes*

DR. BURNEY, *a musician, father of Fanny and Sally*

THE VISITOR

A FOOTMAN

SCENE: *Fanny Burney's drawing-room at Windsor*

TIME: 1791

*Fanny Burney enters from an inner room on the left side. She has evidently been crying, and dries her eyes as she seats herself with an air of dejection at a small table near the center. Footman enters at the open door at the right.*

FOOTMAN [*in a monotonous but not disrespectful tone*]. Mrs. Schwollenberg bids me say to Miss Burney that Mrs. Schwollenberg wishes Miss Burney to be punctual at tea this afternoon and not keep Mrs. Schwollenberg waiting ten minutes as Miss Burney did yesterday.

[*Bows and goes out.*]

FANNY [*impatiently*]. Oh! Odious!

[*Rises quickly and takes seat on the sofa to the left, again drying her eyes. Sally Burney enters on tiptoe. She looks about her, perceives Fanny, rushes up to her, and embraces her affectionately.*]

<sup>1</sup> From *Short Plays about Famous Authors*. Copyright, 1915, by Henry Holt and Company, 19 West Forty-Fourth Street, New York, to whom should be addressed correspondence relative to productions. The play is here reprinted by arrangement with the publishers.



SALLY. Oh, Fanny! I've been home from school a week now! Only fancy! Home for good! And I'm come to see you at last.

FANNY. Why, Sally, my dear, what a delightful surprise! But have you come all alone?

SALLY. No, indeed; I should never have had the courage for that, even though I'm not a school-miss any longer. Father came with me.

FANNY. Father with you! Where is he, pray?

SALLY. Below in the town, paying his respects to Dr. Parsons, who had some new tunes for Father to hear, he said. I found my way up here all by my very own self, after they had shown me the path up the hill. What a monstrous tall fellow of a sentinel you have standing by the lodge gate! I quite shivered with fear as I passed him, but I said "Miss Burney," and looked as bold as a lion, I'm sure. And now I'm here — here in the palace! How fine everything is! Oh, how all the girls at school envied you for living in a palace! [*Stops; looks sharply at Fanny.*] Why, you have been crying, I declare. Your eyes are all red! What has happened?

FANNY [*with a little laugh*]. Nothing has happened. I have a slight cold, I think.

SALLY. And you look quite sad! Do tell me what is wrong!

FANNY [*half-laughing and half-crying*]. Oh, my dear, nothing is wrong — except that life in a palace has some little drawbacks which make themselves felt now and then. But so has life elsewhere, and I am going to forget all about my silly pin-pricks while my little Sally is visiting me. Now lay off your bonnet [*Sally unties bonnet and lays it down*] and tell me all about the people at Norbury. How did you leave our dear Susan?

SALLY. Very well indeed; and I have a great long letter from her which you were to be sure to read before father came. [*Opens reticule and gives letter to Fanny.*]

FANNY [*breaking seal*]. A great long letter indeed! And I am to read it now? You must give me your permission, then. [*Begins to read.*]

SALLY [*after a moment of watching*]. You are crying again! There must be bad news in the letter! Do tell me!

FANNY [*drying her eyes*]. No, Sally dear, there is no bad news in the letter; we will read it together, if you like, to convince you, and then you will know some of my secrets.

[*Reading the letter aloud to Sally, who listens eagerly:*]

MY DEAREST SISTER:

I can no longer be silent as to the concern with which your situation is regarded by those who love you. Your unselfish unwillingness to disappoint our dear father's hopes of promotion by informing him of the true state of your affairs is causing us the greatest anxiety. Though the illustrious persons you serve possess almost all human excellences, and treat you with the most benevolent condescension, yet you can never, in any part of the livelong day, command liberty or social intercourse or repose. Worse than all, you are subject to the caprice of one whose colleague you justly expected to be, but who regards you as her dependent. Your depression of spirits and constant declension in health convince us all that your constitution is surely giving way. Cease to conceal the fact from the father who loves you so truly. No prospect of honors to be derived from your connection with the Court will seem to him of value equal to a cherished daughter's well-being. I implore you in the name of all your friends — and who has so many as you? — to give him your confidence. Be sure that he will receive it without a syllable of reproach or regret for the thwarting of his plans. Speak to him to-day — tell him all, and end the distress of

Your ever-devoted sister

SUSAN PHILLIPS

SALLY. So you were really crying, after all! Poor Fanny! And I thought you were as happy as the day was long, here in the palace, waiting on the Queen! Do tell me all about it, now! Is the Queen not good to you?

FANNY. The Queen! Oh, my dear, she is goodness itself!

I am always happy when I am with her.

SALLY. Who is it, then, that makes you unhappy?

[*A bell rings.*]

FANNY. Oh, I had forgotten that it was so near tea-time.

But I may escape to-day, I suppose. [*Rings bell on the table — Footman enters.*]

John, I shall have tea here instead of above. Bring a tray for two. And make my excuses to Mrs. Schwellenberg, and tell her I have my sister visiting me. [*Footman goes out.*]

SALLY. Mrs. Schwellenberg! What a queer name? Who is she?

FANNY. She is the Senior Keeper of the Queen's Robes. I am only the Second Keeper, you know, and I share these apartments with her. I ought to be pouring tea for her now, I am afraid.

SALLY. Tell me something about her, this Mrs. Schwellenberg. [*Making a grimace at the name.*] Do you like her? [*Footman enters, bearing tray with tea-service, which he places upon the table.*]

FANNY. I think our little confidences will have a better flavor over a dish of tea, perhaps.

[*Is about to pour tea when Mrs. Schwellenberg enters. She is a stout, red-faced woman of between fifty and sixty, and is in a violent passion.*]

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG<sup>1</sup> [*scarcely able to control her anger*].

Miss Berni, vat do this mean? I tell you I vant you promptly, and you come not at all. I have lived in this palace for such a long time as no one else, and I never know no one who behave so ill!

FANNY [*quietly*]. I sent John with a message to explain, Madam, that my sister was come to visit me.

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG [*no less angrily*]. You have not to

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Schwellenberg's dialect and manner of speech are reproduced from Miss Burney's report of them in the *Diary*.

explain, you have to do as I vant. Who is the mistress here, you or me? You think because the Queen like your story-book you are so much better as every one that you do not one thing but be idle in your room and leave me to be alone by myself. But you shall not stay down when there is tea-time. I tell you so vonce — twice — many times, and now I tell you so again that you shall come up.

FANNY [*obviously making an effort to control her indignation*].

I will come, Madam. Will you permit my sister to join us? She has just come from school in Switzerland, and is paying her first visit here.

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG [*rudely*]. For vat must I have the trouble with your sister who comes from school? The gentlemens in my company — gentlemens who vait on the King — do not vant to sit with persons so young like that. Your sister can vait here until I do not vant you longer.

FANNY [*gently to Sally, who has been listening in astonishment*]. Go, my dear, into my bedroom [*pointing to door*] and bring me my fan and gloves. You will find them on the dressing-table. [*Sally goes.*]

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG. Have His Majesty not alreaty sent to you to-day?

FANNY. No, Madam. Sent for what?

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG. He have said this morning to the Queen while I vas vith her that he did vish for some snuff like vat you mixed for the Queen, and he vould ask you for that you mix him some for himself.

FANNY. I have received no message from him, Madam.

[*Reënter Sally, with fan and gloves, which she gives to Fanny.*]

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG [*with a scornful look towards Sally*].

You vill come up at vonce, Miss Berni, and not keep my company vaiting no more. [*Goes out pompously.*]

SALLY [*half-frightened, half-indignant*]. Ugh! what a horrid,

horrid creature! No wonder you are unhappy if you must be where she is. Poor Fanny! I declare, I hate the palace after all.

FANNY [*laying a finger on Sally's lips*]. Hush, my dear. I must go and serve tea to the equerries now, but you will wait patiently for me, I know. I can give you no company to your dish of tea, for I expect no one at this hour, but you will take my place and do the honors if any one should chance to appear, will you not?

[*Kisses Sally and goes out. Sally stands disconsolately in the doorway for a moment, then tiptoes back into the room, goes up to the mirror, and practises curtsying à la grande dame before it. As she is doing so a middle-aged gentleman appears in the doorway. Catching sight of his reflection, she turns in some confusion.*]

VISITOR. Is Miss Burney not within?

SALLY. No, sir; Miss Burney is engaged at present; but she will be not absent long. She is gone to serve tea to the King's equerries above-stairs.

VISITOR [*in a puzzled tone*]. To the King's equerries, eh? — the equerries?

SALLY. Yes, sir. But I was to take her place if any one called while she was away, and [*with a sudden inspiration*] will you not step in and allow me to pour you a dish of tea?

VISITOR [*entering and looking curiously about him*]. A dish of tea, eh? — a dish of tea? Very kind, indeed.

SALLY. Nay, sir, I am doing only as my sister bade me. Pray, be seated.

[*The Visitor takes a chair at the table, Sally sits down opposite him. As she does so, the Visitor starts as if in surprise, without, however, attracting Sally's notice.*]

VISITOR. So you are Miss Burney's sister, eh?

SALLY. Yes, sir, but only just freed from school in Switzerland.

*[Pouring out a cup of tea and handing it to the Visitor.]*

VISITOR. Never been to the palace before, then?

SALLY. No, sir; never before. When my sister first came here I was too young, and they thought it would not be fitting for her to receive me.

VISITOR. That was foolish of them — very foolish.

SALLY. And then I was sent away abroad to school so that I might get a finer education than was to be had at home.

VISITOR. Ah, French and fal-lals, I suppose. That's what you get abroad.

SALLY. But I wouldn't stop long after coming home from school. I was so eager to see my sister in the palace.

*[Sighs deeply as she pours out a cup of tea for herself.]*

VISITOR. A great thing for your sister to be in the palace — a great thing, to be sure!

SALLY. Yes, I always used to think so and boast about it to the girls at school. But I should have known better than to boast — I am well paid for it.

VISITOR. No — no — never boast.

SALLY. Indeed, I would never have boasted if I had known the truth. But how could I help believing that it was a fine thing to be in the palace and wait on the Queen, and see the King himself, every day of one's life! *[Visitor draws himself up complacently.]* Poor Fanny! *[Sighing again.]* But will you not let me give you another dish of tea?

VISITOR *[passing his cup]*. A very good brew indeed — a very good brew. *[Drinks.]* But you say, "Poor Fanny!" Why "Poor Fanny"?

SALLY. Ah, sir, I have a good reason to say poor Fanny, as you would know if you were better acquainted with the



people in the palace. [*Visitor seems about to interrupt, but checks himself.*] As for me, I had not been here a quarter of an hour before I found out how things stood with my sister. Indeed, I cannot see how she endures such an odious creature!

VISITOR. Endures? She loves the Queen, surely — the good Queen?

SALLY. No, no, it's not the Queen. The King and Queen are both good and kind, she says. But [*hesitating*] Fanny would not like me to be saying all this. 'Tis all because I am so angry. When I am angry I must be speaking my mind to some one.

VISITOR. Yes, yes! speak your mind — tell me — I am Miss Burney's friend. I always was. Tell me again — is she unhappy? — I can't believe it — the Queen does all she can for her, I'm sure. And if she were unhappy, she would surely tell the Queen — the Queen wants no one about her to be unhappy. I'll not believe it until I hear that Miss Burney says so herself.

SALLY [*hurt at his incredulity*]. Ah, you don't know how good she is. I could not understand it myself until I saw my sister Susan's letter. It is on account of our father that she will not tell the Queen. Look, you may see for yourself in the letter that Susan sent to her this very day. [*Takes letter and going over to the Visitor, points out passages and reads*]: “Your unwillingness to disappoint our dear father's hopes of promotion by informing him of the true state of affairs is causing us the greatest anxiety on your behalf.”

VISITOR. Ah!

SALLY. Well, now you may as well look at the rest, and see who knows more about life in a palace, you or I.

VISITOR [*taking letter and looking through it slowly*]. “Causing us the greatest anxiety.” [*Shaking his head gravely.*]

“The illustrious persons you serve possess almost all



human excellences." [*Nodding his head as if in pleased assent.*] "Subject to the beck and call — regards you as her dependent —" Ah, yes, yes — the Schwellenberg — I know she must have a hard time with the Schwellenberg, but I thought — well, well, this will not do — not do at all.

SALLY. Indeed, sir, you would be as sorry as I am if you had seen Fanny's eyes all red from crying, and you would be as angry as I am if you had heard how rudely she was spoken to when the Mrs. what-d'ye-call-her came here to order her above-stairs. [*Mimicking Mrs. Schwellenberg.*] Miss Berni — vat does this mean? You have not to explain — you are to do as I vant — For vat must I have the trouble with your sister!

VISITOR [*laughing at the mimicry*]. Ah, very good! very good! But we should not laugh because people are unhappy. We should see what can be done for them. Well, well, we shall see, we shall see. But now it is time for me to take my leave. [*Rises.*] I had come to ask Miss Burney to fill my box with some of her snuff. She mixes it exactly right — exactly right. I will leave my box [*places box on table*], and my kind hostess will tell Miss Burney that I will send for it shortly.

SALLY. Who shall I say will send, sir?

VISITOR. Who? Oh, yes — say Colonel George. Your servant, madam, and my thanks. [*Bowing.*]

SALLY [*curtsying*]. I wish you a very good day, sir.

[*Visitor goes out. After he has gone, Sally takes the snuffbox from the table and examines it curiously. As she is doing so, Miss Burney enters.*]

FANNY. Well, Sally, my dear, here I am back, you see. The equerries have all been properly tea'd, and I am free for my little sister at last. Poor little sister, to be left all alone in a great gloomy drawing-room!

SALLY. Ah, but I wasn't alone. I had a visitor!

FANNY. A visitor? Who, pray?

SALLY. Colonel George.

FANNY [*puzzled*]. I know no Colonel George. Was he a stranger? And who announced him?

SALLY. He spoke as though he knew you — though, to be sure, he knew little enough about the palace, as I took pains to tell him. He came in as coolly as you please, so that there was nothing for it but to bid him be seated and have his dish of tea.

FANNY. Unannounced — why, no one but — tell me, what was he like?

SALLY. He was a goodish-sized fat man, not quite so old as Father; pleasant enough, though a little stupid, I thought. And he kept on saying things twice over, as though he couldn't quite hear himself.

FANNY [*in a tone of distress*]. Oh, Sally, you can't mean it — Why, you surely haven't —

SALLY. Why, what ails you, Fanny? You bade me take your place and I did; and this Colonel George, whoever he may be that seems to distress you so — I'm sure I can see no reason for it, for he was not so ill, even though he had few wits — came only to ask you for some snuff that you could mix better than any one else, he said.

FANNY [*sinking into a chair, in utter consternation*]. Oh, Sally, Sally, you poor little goose!

SALLY [*aggrieved*]. And here's the snuffbox he left for you to fill when he should send for it.

[*Handing box to Fanny.*]

FANNY [*taking box*]. Ah, I was sure of it! Had you no idea who your Colonel George was?

SALLY. None in the world. And who was he, pray?

FANNY. Why, His Majesty, himself!

SALLY. Oh, no, no!

FANNY. This is his snuffbox. I have seen him with it a thousand times. And Mrs. Schwellenberg told me he

wished for some snuff of my mixing. And he always repeats his words in this fashion. [*Imitating the Visitor*]: “Yes, yes” — “very good, very good” — Was not that the way?

SALLY. Yes, it was indeed. Oh, what shall I do? Why didn't I know? You don't know what I told him!

FANNY. Told him! What did you tell him?

SALLY. Ah, you may as well know it all. I was so angry at Mrs. What-do-you-call-her, and you know I can never be silent when I am angry — and he seemed so kind that I — oh! how can I say it?

FANNY. You did what? [*Gently.*] You know, dear, I cannot be angry with my little sister, only sorry.

SALLY. I showed him Susan's letter!

[*In the pause which follows Dr. Burney enters. He is about sixty years old, stout, florid, and cheery.*]

DR. BURNEY [*to Fanny*]. Well, my dear, I am come at last.

Dr. Parsons was for playing me a half-score of his newest and slowest tunes, or I should have followed Sally sooner. [*To Sally.*] And what does Miss Bread-and-Butter think of the palace, eh? [*To Fanny, again.*] There was no keeping her away, once she came home — nothing would serve but she must visit Fanny in the palace, before any of the others were as much as thought of. But [*observing the appearance of distress on Sally's and Fanny's countenances*] what is this? What has happened?

SALLY [*sobbing*]. Oh, Father, you don't know what I've done!

DR. BURNEY. Why, what can you have done? Not quarreled with Fanny, surely? No one could do that. [*To Fanny.*] Do you tell me, Fanny.

FANNY [*greatly disconcerted*]. Why, Father, I was obliged to leave Sally to herself while I served tea in Mrs. Schwel-  
lenberg's apartment and —

DR. BURNEY. And the spoiled little minx did some mischief, I'll be bound — smashed your pet china monster, or

ruined your best paduasoy with trying it on when she'd no business to be meddling with it.

SALLY [*indignantly*]. Indeed, Father, I did no such thing. But I will tell you, since you must know. [*Disregarding Fanny's anxious efforts to induce her to be silent.*] I showed the King Susan's letter!

DR. BURNEY. Susan's letter! What letter?

SALLY. The letter that Susan sent Fanny to persuade her to give up her place here at the palace.

DR. BURNEY [*nonplussed*]. But why should Susan want Fanny to give up her place at the palace?

SALLY. Why? [*To Fanny.*] Yes, Fanny, I will tell, since you will not. If the King knows it, Father may as well. [*To Dr. Burney again.*] Because she is miserable and ill and unhappy, on account of a horrid woman with a German alphabet for a name, and because she won't tell about it for fear of disappointing you.

[*As Dr. Burney stares uncomprehendingly, she thrusts the letter into his hand. He reads it slowly.*]

DR. BURNEY [*turning to Fanny*]. My dear, if this is true we are all to blame for not having greater confidence in one another. But Susan has judged me rightly. There is no promotion worth the price of my dear daughter's well-being.

FANNY. But, Father, I had such hopes that the Queen's favor would bring you the recognition you have earned so well! My troubles would have seemed nothing if only the King could have promised you the place you —

[*Enter Footman, bearing tray with a letter.*]

FOOTMAN. A letter for Miss Burney's sister.

SALLY [*starting forward*]. For me? From whom?

FOOTMAN. I was to say from Colonel George, Madam.  
[*Exit.*]

SALLY [*in distress*]. Ah! Now I shall find that I have wrecked everything for you.

FANNY [*gently*]. Do not mind, my dear. You did not mean the least ill in the world.

SALLY [*breaking the seal and reading*]:

Colonel George presents his compliments and assures Miss Burney's sister that it is the King's pleasure, and will be the Queen's, that Miss Burney take whatever steps be necessary for the preservation of her health and for the proper exercise of those talents which first brought her to Their Majesties' notice. Should Miss Burney no longer feel it wise to remain a member of the Queen's household, Colonel George is authorized to add the assurance that she will lose nothing of the Queen's regard by ceasing to attend upon her. Miss Burney may also feel at liberty to count on the King's recognition of her father's merit, as soon as any position worthy of Dr. Burney's acceptance falls within the King's gift. Colonel George begs that Miss Burney's sister will retain the snuffbox which Colonel George left in her possession as a slight mark of her guest's appreciation and enjoyment of her sincerity.

[*Dropping the letter.*] Then I've not been so dreadfully meddlesome after all! Did you understand it, Fanny and Father?

FANNY [*taking the letter*]. 'Tis the King's hand, sure enough.

I may resign, and keep the Queen's favor! And Father's promotion is on the way! Oh, Sally, you little diplomatist! You should have been at Court instead of me!

DR. BURNEY. Nay, I have tried the family fortunes with one daughter, and am lucky to have escaped without losing her, it would seem. If the King will make me his bandmaster, well and good; but I fear the Burney womenfolk were not meant to be Mistresses of the Robes. I was stupid and owlish not to have noted your distress before, Fanny, but 'tis not too late to make you well and happy again — Providence be praised — and who knows — "Evelina" and "Cecilia" may have a sister

heroine before long. And now [*to Sally*] get your bonnet, Mistress Sally. We have had our fill of the palace for one day.

SALLY. And such fine news as we have for Susan! What will she say to my letter — and to my snuffbox?

FANNY. She will say that she chose a clever ambassadress to send to Court.

DR. BURNEY [*to Sally, who is tying on her bonnet*]. Bid adieu to the Keeper of the Robes. She will soon be plain Fanny Burney again, back with her old father in Poland Street.

SALLY. And with Esther in Mickleham, and Susan in Norbury! Ah, to have Fanny at home again will be better than having a sister in the palace! But [*drawing herself up proudly*] the King is not so ill to have a chat with, there's no denying it. [*Putting box in reticule.*]

FANNY [*laughing and kissing her*]. Good-bye, my little courtier. [*Curtsying to her father.*] Good-bye, sir. You shall hear all the hows and whens of my change of station as soon as they have been arranged for. Tell Susan I am grateful, and that all will be well now.

[*Dr. Burney and Sally go out. Fanny stands in the doorway for a moment, looking after them; then turns back into the room. As she does so, Mrs. Schwollenberg enters.*]

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG [*much perturbed*]. Miss Berni! For vat do you vait? Do you not know that this afternoon I vill go out, and you shall take my place to be ready for Her Majesty when she shall come back from her drive? But no, you do not know nothings — never do you know nothings at all!

FANNY [*gayly*]. I declare, Madam, I had forgotten. Or perhaps you had forgotten to tell me. And so you are going out? Is it for a visit, or merely to enjoy the air?

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG [*angrily*]. It makes no matter for



why I go, so long as you do not forget for why you are here. I tell you vonce more it is for you to do as I shall vant, and not to ask any questions.

FANNY [*still gayly*]. Yes, Madam, to be sure. Am I to go to Her Majesty now?

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG. It is not yet the Queen's time for an hour. But I did come to tell you that you shall send your sister away, so that you shall not be too late.

FANNY. My sister has gone, Madam. And now, since we have some time, shall we not play your favorite game of cards?

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG [*astonished*]. For vat you ask me to play cards? You are always so tired at night ven ve play. The gentlemens, they always say, "Miss Berni, she get tired with the cards," and I say, "It is nonsense. Ve play no more as four hours. For vhy shall she be tired?" But I tell them to-night Miss Berni am not tired, she ask to play.

FANNY. I shall be only too happy, Madam.

MRS. SCHWELLENBERG [*scrutinizing Fanny sharply*]. For vhy you say you are happy?

FANNY. I say so, because I *am* happy, Madam. And now, if you are willing, we will go to our cards.

[*Mrs. Schwollenberg goes out tossing her head and muttering, "Happy, for vhy happy?" Fanny curtsies very low as Mrs. Schwollenberg walks away, then follows her out of the room.*]

CURTAIN



# JOHN SILVER OFF DUTY<sup>1</sup>

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

## CHARACTERS

LONG JOHN SILVER

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER SMOLLETT

THE AUTHOR OF "TREASURE ISLAND"

*Ad libitum:* HANDS, PEW, GEORGE MERRY, DOCTOR LIVESEY, FLINT, and other members of the pirate crew.

SCENE: *A rather plain interior with a door in the center of the back and another door at the left. The right-hand wall may be broken by a window or a fireplace. At the right center is a writing-table, on which are a pile of manuscript, an ink-pot, and a pen. There is a chair at the back of the table, facing the audience, and a bench or stool is about left center, farther down stage than the table.*

LONG JOHN SILVER [*entering through center door, strolls down to table, and looks at the manuscript. A moment later as Captain Smollett appears in the doorway, with a man-o'-war's salute and a beaming countenance, he speaks.*] Good-morning, Cap'n.

CAPTAIN SMOLLETT [*grunting*]. Ah, Silver! You're in a bad way, Silver.

SILVER [*remonstrating*]. Now, Cap'n Smollett, dooty is dooty, as I knows, and none better; but we're off dooty now; and I can't see no call to keep up the morality business.

SMOLLETT. You're a damned rogue, my man.

SILVER. Come, come, Cap'n, be just. There's no call to be

<sup>1</sup> Arranged by James Plaisted Webber from *The Persons in the Tale*. Reprinted by arrangement with Stevenson's publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons. Correspondence in regard to performances of this play should be addressed to Hanson Hart Webster, 2 Park Street, Boston.

angry with me in earnest. I'm on'y a chara'ter in a sea story. I don't really exist.

SMOLLETT. Well, I don't really exist either — which seems to meet that!

SILVER. I wouldn't set no limits to what a virtuous chara'ter might consider argument. But I'm the villain of this tale, I am; and speaking as one seafaring man to another, what I want to know is, what's the odds?

SMOLLETT. Were you never taught your catechism?

Don't you know there's such a thing as an Author? •

SILVER [*derisively*]. Such a thing as a Author? And who better'n me? And the p'int is, — if the Author made you, he made Long John, and he made Hands, and Pew, and George Merry — [*As each is mentioned, he appears for a moment at the center door and then stands down left*] — not that George is up to much [*Merry makes gesture of resentment*], for he's little more'n a name; and he made Flint [*A shadowy veiled figure like the Ghost in Hamlet appears for an instant*], what there is of him; and he made this here mutiny [*Several members of the pirate crew enter stealthily from left*], you keep such a work about [*Shout of mutineers*]; you keep such a work about [*A pistol shot is heard off right*]; and he had Tom Redruth shot; and well, if that's an Author, give me Pew! [*Pew bows his thanks to Silver.*]

SMOLLETT. Don't you believe in a future state? Do you think there's nothing but the present story?

SILVER. I don't rightly know for that; and I don't see what's it's got to do with it, anyway. What I want to know is this: if there is sich a thing as a Author, I'm his favourite chara'ter. [*Sits on table with self-complacent air.*] He does me fathoms better'n he does you — fathoms, he does. [*Crew mutters, "Aye, aye, that he does."*] He keeps me on deck mostly all the time, crutch and all; and he leaves you measling in the hold, where

nobody can't see you, nor wants to; and you may lay to that! If there is a Author, by thunder, he's on my side, and you may lay to it!

SMOLLETT. I see he's giving you a long rope. But that can't change a man's convictions. I know the author respects me; I feel it in my bones. When you and I had that talk at the blockhouse door, who do you think he was for, my man?

CREW. Aye, aye!

SILVER. And don't he respect me? Ah, you should 'a' heard me putting down my mutiny, George Merry and Morgan and that lot, no longer ago'n last chapter. [*Crew grumbles dissent.*] You'd 'a' heard something then! You'd 'a' seen what the Author thinks o' me! But come now, do you consider yourself a virtuous chara'ter clean through?

SMOLLETT [*solemnly*]. God forbid! I am a man that tries to do his duty, and makes a mess of it as often as not. [*Sits down stage left, sighing.*] I'm not a very popular man at home, Silver, I'm afraid.

CREW. We'll lay to that!

SILVER [*coming down to him*]. Ah! Then how about this sequel of yours? Are you to be Capt'n Smollett just the same as ever, and not very popular at home, says you! And if so, why it's "Treasure Island" over again, by thunder; and I'll be Long John, and Pew'll be Pew [*Pew bows*]; and we'll have another mutiny, as like as not. [*Voices of pirates shouting, "Aye, aye, another mutiny!" Smollett feels for his gun and starts to rise.*] Or are you to be somebody else? And if so, why, what better are you? And what the worse am I?

SMOLLETT. Why, look here, my man, I can't understand how this story [*points to manuscript on table*] comes about at all, can I? I can't see how you and I, who don't exist, should get to speaking here, and smoke our pipes, for all

the world like reality? Very well, then, who am I to pipe up with my opinions? I know the Author's on the side of good; he tells me so; it runs out of his pen as he writes. Well, that's all I need to know; I'll take my chance upon the rest.

SILVER [*musingly*]. It's a fact he seemed to be against George Merry. [*Merry assents.*] But George is little more'n a name at the best of it. [*Merry, unseen by Silver, threatens him with the Black Spot.*] And to get into soundings for once. [*Hobbles back to table.*] What is this good? I made a mutiny, and I been a gentleman o' fortune; well, but by all stories, you ain't no saint. [*Smollett makes gesture of admission.*] I'm a man that keeps company very easy; even by your own account, you ain't. And to my certain knowledge, you're a hard man to haze. Which is good, and which is bad? Ah, tell me that! Here we are in stays, and you may lay to it!

SMOLLETT. We're none of us perfect. That's a fact of religion, my man. All I can say is, I try to do my duty; and if you try to do yours, I can't compliment you on your success.

SILVER [*derisively*]. And so you was the judge, was you?

SMOLLETT. I would be both judge and hangman for you, my man, and never turn a hair. But I get beyond that. It mayn't be sound theology — but it's common sense — that what is good is useful too. There and thereabout, for I don't set up to be no thinker. Now, where would a story go to if there were no virtuous characters?

CREW. Aye, where? Where?

SILVER. If you go to that, where would a story begin if there wasn't no villains?

SMOLLETT. Well, that's pretty much my thought. The author has to get a story. That's what he wants. And to get a story [*He handles the manuscript*] and to have a

man like [*Doctor Livesey enters. Silver salutes him.*] the doctor, say, given a proper chance, he has to put in men like you and Hands. [*Hands salutes.*] But he's on the right side; and mind your eye! [*Doctor comes down to Smollett at right.*] You're not through this story yet; there's trouble coming for you.

SILVER [*hobbling to Smollett*]. What'll you bet?

SMOLLETT. Much I care if there ain't. I'm glad to be Alexander Smollett, bad as he is; and I thank my stars upon my knees that I'm not Silver. [*At this moment the Author enters. If he can make up to look like Stevenson, he should enter through the center door. Otherwise, he should enter lower right, come to the table and keep his back to the audience. He does not see the figures at the left. Smollett lifts a warning finger as the Author is about to begin writing.*] But there's the ink-bottle opening. To quarters! [*The characters all vanish.*]

AUTHOR [*beginning to write, says announcingly*]. Chapter thirty-three!

CURTAIN

# THE LITTLE BOY OUT OF THE WOOD <sup>1</sup>

BY KATHLEEN CONYNGHAM GREENE

## PERSONS

BESSIE, a showroom girl in a hat-shop

A LITTLE BOY

SCENE: *The skirts of a small wood near Epping Forest*

TIME: *Bank Holiday Afternoon*

[*Bessie is discovered, sitting on the grass. Her large hat is on the ground beside her. On her lap are the works of several poets — Wordsworth, Shelley, Matthew Arnold — all in cheap editions.*]

BESSIE [*putting Matthew Arnold open face downwards on the grass*]. How much better they taste out here. It's like sausage, rolls and milk — horrid in the shop, but heavenly out here! I'm glad I didn't go with the others. Fancy Brighton or the Crystal Palace when you can get this! Oh! there's a butterfly! And the birds and the flowers. . . . O Heaven! Heaven! Heaven!

[*She throws her arms back over her head, then picks up her book again, and reads aloud:*]

“Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,  
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see  
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep,  
And air-swept lindens yield  
Their scent and rustle down their perfumed showers  
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid.”

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by arrangement with the author and her publisher, Mr. John Lane, The Bodley Head, London. Correspondence in regard to performances of this play should be addressed to Hanson Hart Webster, 2 Park Street, Boston.

Oh, he knew!

*[While she is reading, a little boy has come out of the wood behind her and has sat down by her side.]*

BOY. Yes, he knew — after his own fashion.

BESSIE *[turning round to look at him]*. Why, little boy, what do you know about it?

BOY. Oh, I know a great deal about it!

BESSIE. About poetry? Why, you're quite a little fellow!

Not more'n seven or eight, are you?

BOY. Oh, I'm much older than that!

BESSIE. And how funnily you are dressed! We wouldn't send out a suit like that from Madam's!

BOY. No?

BESSIE. Where do you come from, anyway?

BOY *[airily]*. Oh, I come out of the wood!

BESSIE. What were you doing there?

BOY. I live there. It's mine.

BESSIE. No! Not really? I say . . . I mean . . . I thought all Epping Forest belonged to the King. I didn't know there was a house right in there in the wood.

BOY. No, there's not a house. I hate houses.

BESSIE. But you said you lived there?

BOY. So I do.

BESSIE. Oh! don't you talk!

*[The Little Boy clasps his hands round his knees and looks at her.]*

BOY. So you like my birds and my butterflies and *[he waves his hand]* my trees?

BESSIE. Well! I don't know that they're yours, but of course I like them. Yes.

BOY. You live in the town?

BESSIE. Yes. I guess I have to. I'm a worker, you see. Don't know why I should tell you this.

BOY *[nodding his head]*. Tell me.

BESSIE. I'm in a hat-shop in Bond Street. I only get out



here because it's a holiday. I just . . . I just live for these holidays. Last one it was wet.

BOY. And you stayed at home.

BESSIE. No. I came here just the same. I spoilt my best hat, but it was grand in the rain. So singy.

BOY. I know. All the trees were talking and slapping their hands together — swish, swish. And the rain slipping off the leaves.

BESSIE [*eagerly*]. Yes! And the smell of it! Like, oh, I don't know what!

BOY. This is good too?

BESSIE. Oh, this is Heaven! And the others have all gone to Brighton except some that have gone to the Crystal Palace! How they could!

BOY. You don't like that?

BESSIE. With this so near? And . . . and . . . they've all got men with them too!

BOY. Wouldn't you have one?

BESSIE. Not I! I've no use for them. They're stuffy and dull and they've only walked on pavements. I brought a young chap down here once. He was dead keen to come. He just walked along with his head up and said, "Let's get off and have some tea." I just cried when I got home.

BOY. I know.

BESSIE [*looking at him with curiosity*]. Say, I don't know why I'm telling you all this. And you're such a funny little fellow!

BOY [*laughing and showing his teeth*]. So I am!

BESSIE. Where do you come from, really?

BOY. Oh! just out of the wood.

BESSIE. Don't you go to school?

BOY. I know all that's worth knowing.

BESSIE. Oh, hold on . . . What? Latin and Greek and book-keeping?

[*The Boy nods.*]

BESSIE. You don't tell me . . . ! [The Boy laughs.]

BESSIE. Don't you ever wear more clothes than that?

BOY. No.

BESSIE. But in winter?

BOY. I'm not cold.

BESSIE [*reflectively*]. I'd like to have the dressing of you! You've got the funniest little face! Rather wild sometimes, aren't you?

BOY. I can be.

BESSIE [*after a few seconds' pause*]. Do you know this place?

BOY. Yes. It's nearly all mine round here.

BESSIE. Yours! I like that! And you only a baby! Are there any cornfields? "Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep." I've only seen them from the train.

"With distant cries of reapers in the corn, all the live murmur of a summer day." Oh! he knew!

BOY. Yes. He knew me, but not so well as some.

BESSIE. Knew you? You go on! Why, he died years ago.

BOY. He knew me, in gardens and cornfields, on river-banks. Here is one who knew me better.

[He picks up another book.]

BESSIE. Oh, Wordsworth. He's great.

BOY [*nodding*]. He knew me.

BESSIE [*leaning her elbows on her knees and her chin on her hands and looking at him closely*]. Why, who are you?

BOY. Oh, I'm just a little boy out of the wood!

BESSIE. But how could you have known them? They died ages and ages ago.

BOY [*looking at Wordsworth*]. He knew me. He was half afraid. They are all half afraid when they see far enough.

BESSIE. What? Of you?

BOY. I'm young here. Only a little boy. But go further into the forest. I'm old there. Go north, where Words-

worth used to meet me. There I'm terrible. I held him. He knew me so well that he was always half afraid.

BESSIE. Why do you look at me like that?

BOY. I wonder if you know me too?

BESSIE. I don't know . . . you make me feel all creepy.

BOY. Are you going back to the streets? Think how the leaves will sound out here at night. Rustle! Rustle! Think of my servants who will come and watch with you. Badger and weasel and hare. Do you hear that bee booming? At night you can hear the beetles booming half a mile away.

BESSIE. Why are you saying all this?

BOY. Have you ever been in the wood after a frost? Have you heard the earth crackling when it's getting free? Have you ever seen the leaves dropping in November? Do you know the young beech leaves? They are like silk when they uncurl in the sun. Then there will come great storms . . .

BESSIE [*shivering*]. Oh, don't you . . .

BOY. Away in the woods the leaves are whispering all day. You'd be alone with me there.

BESSIE. How you do talk. I must get back now or I'll oversleep myself and be late at the shop to-morrow.

BOY. Shops and pavements and rattling carts, and you might have me!

BESSIE. You go on. I've got to earn my living.

BOY. There was a man walked after me all over the world. All along the roads and woods and ditches. He slept under the stars. He was very happy. He was mine.

BESSIE. A tramp! Eugh!

BOY. Did you ever hear a wood-pigeon talking and muttering and gabbling before the sun had got through the leaves to your eyelids?

BESSIE. Oh! you and your talk! Give me my books! Quick now!

[*The Boy takes out a little pipe.*]

BOY. Did you ever hear my music?

BESSIE. What is it?

BOY. This is my little pipe. Sit down and I will play you a tune and then you can go away.

*[Bessie sits down and pulls at the grass with her fingers. The Boy looks at her sideways out of the corners of his eyes.]*

BESSIE *[putting her hands over her face]*. Don't look at me like that! I don't know what to make of you! You frighten me, I think!

*[The Boy puts the pipe to his lips and blows a long note like a bird's. A thrush, far back in the forest, answers. There is a rustling among the leaves behind. Bessie looks at him with frightened eyes.]*

BOY. Did you hear that in your books?

BESSIE *[nervously gathering her books together in her lap]*.

I must pack up the books. I must go home.

*[The Boy takes up his pipe again and plays very softly. Bessie looks at him.]*

BESSIE *[softly]*. I can't. I can't.

*[The Boy stands up, still playing. Another bird calls out of the wood. The leaves touch one another. Bessie hides her face in her lap and sobs. The Boy walks away between the trees, still playing. Three loud notes ring out. Bessie springs up, scattering her books to right and left. She catches up her skirt in both hands.]*

BESSIE. I'm coming. I'm coming.

*[She disappears into the wood.]*

CURTAIN

# THE LEGEND OF SAINT DOROTHY <sup>1</sup>

BY GEORGIANA GODDARD KING

## CHARACTERS

THE EMPEROR OF ROME

THEOPHILUS, *a young nobleman*

PETERKIN, *his page*

A CAPTAIN

SAINT DOROTHY, *a Christian maiden*

SCENE: *A Public Place*

[*Enter Theophilus and Peterkin.*]

THEOPHILUS. Peterkin!

PETERKIN. Master!

THEOPHILUS. What is it o'clock?

PETERKIN. Dinner time, master.

THEOPHILUS. I asked you not the time, fool, but the hour.

PETERKIN. And I told you, sir, according to my means, than which no man can do more. Do you take me for the town hall, that I should wear a clock in my forehead?

THEOPHILUS. I pray you by what means, not knowing the hour, do you tell the time?

PETERKIN. Marry, sir, my stomach cries meal time, as true as a peal of bells.

THEOPHILUS. Say like the bell over a shop door, for it jingles every five minutes.

PETERKIN. Now in good faith, I hold it wiser to be dealing

<sup>1</sup> From *Comedies and Legends for Marionettes*, by Georgiana Goddard King. Reprinted by permission of the author and the Macmillan Company, publishers. Correspondence in regard to performances should be addressed to the publishers, 60-66 Fifth Avenue, New York.

with good meat and wine and therewith thankful, than to be gaping at the sun and feeding on discontent.

THEOPHILUS. Why should I be content? I have nothing to wish for.

PETERKIN. Most men who wish are discontented, and with the getting of their wishes contentment comes.

THEOPHILUS. Man's sole happiness lies in desire, and when desire is dead he might as well be all underground.

PETERKIN. Where certainly there is no desiring except on the part of Goodman Worm.

THEOPHILUS. If I drink, eat, wear fine clothes, build me a golden house, wherein am I better than the cat stealing cream, the lion springing on a goat, the peacock spreading his tail, and the bee at work upon the comb? Am I not shamed by all these? For I have neither the cunning of the cat, the strength of the lion, the beauty of the peacock, nor the science of the bee.

PETERKIN. Why not be then a poet, master, and sing with more skill than the thrush, with more sense than the nightingale, and with more sweetness than the magpie?

THEOPHILUS. Because the nightingale would outdo me in skill, the thrush in sweetness, and the pie in sense, for he asks only what he needs.

PETERKIN. Then you must needs turn soldier, for he has neither skill, sweetness, nor sense.

THEOPHILUS. Three things which I cannot do without. Neither poetry nor war is to my taste, and as for religion, with all due reverence to the immortal gods, they have less sense than a poet, less sweetness than a soldier, and less skill than a mere man who eats, drinks, and carries his clothing about.

PETERKIN. I see plainly, master, that unless I find you an occupation very soon, you will walk yourself off to an asylum for lunatics and maintain them to be the only

rational company. How say you, shall we go and hunt Christians?

THEOPHILUS. I tell you, no! I'll have no hand in that matter! They are as foolish-innocent a set of folk as ever lived by bread.

PETERKIN. But the Emperor takes huge delight in the new sport.

THEOPHILUS. The Emperor is no soldier, to kill defenceless women, and no sportsman, to strike at what will neither run nor strike back. I would as lief go into the butcher's business and produce mutton and veal, as keep company with the Emperor in these days.

*[Enter the Emperor.]*

EMPEROR. By Jupiter and Apollo, 'tis a nipping day.

PETERKIN. See you now, master, how wit keeps a man warm. I should have thought it was June.

THEOPHILUS. It is seasonable weather, sire.

EMPEROR. Now, by Mahound, it is unseasonable if I am cold. It shall be a warm day, I say. Am I Emperor for nothing?

THEOPHILUS. Doubtless, if Your Majesty does due sacrifice to Apollo, he will at your imperial request drive his chariot near enough to the earth to relieve Your Majesty's shivering fit.

EMPEROR. I know a trick worth two of that. Ho, guard!

*[Enter Captain.]*

Go fire me some dozen of Christians' houses in this neighbourhood, till they warm the air.

*[Exeunt Emperor and Captain.]*

THEOPHILUS. So folly finds ways to warm itself. Go home and dine, Peterkin; I have no mind to eat.

PETERKIN. Nor have I, master. No, I thank the gods I



have two stout jaws to munch withal, and thirty teeth moreover. [Exit]<sup>1</sup>

[Enter Saint Dorothy.]

THEOPHILUS. What goddess comes? Too simple for Pallas, too maidenly for Venus, too —

SAINT DOROTHY. Spare your catalogue, sir. I am but a Christian girl whose house is now a heap of ashes.

THEOPHILUS. Lady, I had four houses — they are all yours.

SAINT DOROTHY. I have not begged, sir.

THEOPHILUS. Nor do I give to beggars.

SAINT DOROTHY. I am not for sale.

THEOPHILUS. Nor am I a slave dealer. But there are such things as friends.

SAINT DOROTHY. Not for me among the worshippers of false gods.

[Enter Emperor.]

EMPEROR. Who is that, in Cupid's name?

THEOPHILUS. A lady, sir, to whom —

SAINT DOROTHY. To whom you are a stranger, sir. Your Majesty, an orphan and homeless.

EMPEROR. I've seen your face before to-day.

SAINT DOROTHY. Doubtless, sire, when I left my burning house just now.

EMPEROR. So, now I have it! We smoked the old foxes and out pops the little white rabbit. Well [*clashing his sword against his shield*], you're done with that stuff.

SAINT DOROTHY. Your majesty, I am a Christian.

EMPEROR [*same gesture*]. Now, by Mahound, you won't be long.

SAINT DOROTHY. Always, sire. That is the only name one does not lose in death.

<sup>1</sup> It is suggested that at this point the curtain be lowered for a moment to suggest a lapse of time.

EMPEROR. That I will give you the chance of proving.  
Guard!

[*Enter Captain.*]

Bring her head in an hour to the palace.

THEOPHILUS. One moment, sire. The bloodless victories of faith are the glorious ones, and it is more royal to reduce the number of unbelievers by conversion than by decapitation. The lady is not only fair but sage. Let me attempt her reason.

EMPEROR. By Mars, you waste your breath. In an hour's time her sacrifice or her head. I'll go make search for others. Am I not Emperor?

[*Clashes his sword and strides out, Captain striding after.*]

THEOPHILUS. Sweet lady —

SAINT DOROTHY. Sir, you waste your breath. I go gladlier than to my bridal.

THEOPHILUS. But, even though doubtfully, to your bridal, I trust. My name — you may have heard it — is Theophilus.

SAINT DOROTHY. I have heard of you as an honourable gentleman, but one who thinks himself too wise to listen to true wisdom.

THEOPHILUS. Dear child, you wrong the world to take your youth and beauty from it.

SAINT DOROTHY. The truth for which I die is more beautiful than beauty's self.

THEOPHILUS. Truth has many forms and even the foolish-est gods stand in some way for goodness.

SAINT DOROTHY. Mine is all-wise, all-good.

THEOPHILUS. Dorothy, I will not strive to shake you there, for I know your people are immovable. But my wife could stand in no danger even from religion.

SAINT DOROTHY. Your heart I know is noble; but I like

better my red bridal even though the chamberlain is grim.

THEOPHILUS. I will carry you away to an island set jewel-like in turquoise sea, where roses bloom every hour and the boughs are heavy with dropping fruits. Dear girl, the grave is dark and cold and barren, and sun is here and sweetness unchanging.

SAINT DOROTHY. Where I go the roses never fade and the trees bear each month twelve manner of fruits.

THEOPHILUS. I cannot see your fruits and flowers.

SAINT DOROTHY. But I will send you some, if —

THEOPHILUS. If what? [*With sorrowful scorn.*] Send them, and I will follow you to pluck you others.

SAINT DOROTHY. Then expect them. Captain!

[*Enter Captain.*]

THEOPHILUS. Can you not love me, girl?

SAINT DOROTHY. Greatly, dear Theophilus, but not so much as martyrdom. Remember the roses.

[*Exit, Captain following. Pause. Theophilus stands, his face hidden in his arm.*<sup>1</sup> *Here a voice or voices may sing "For thee, O dear, dear country," or other parts of "The Celestial Country."*]

[*Enter Emperor.*]

EMPEROR. Where's your girl?

THEOPHILUS. Your Majesty should know better than I.

By this time, I think, neither of us knows.

EMPEROR. Am I not Emperor? Is not my will the Roman law? When I frown, do not the gods tremble on their golden seats, and the walls of heaven shake at my stride? I will have no worship but by special orders; the gods are gods because I choose them to be.

<sup>1</sup> Here again the curtain may be lowered to suggest a lapse of time. The music would occur during this interval.

[*Enter Peterkin with basket.*]

PETERKIN. Sir, one gave me this for you: a gold-haired lad yonder, some princess' page may be, for he was pretty enough to be a girl, and proud enough to be a king's son, and sweeter-voiced than the softest singer at the Emperor's court.

THEOPHILUS. Roses! but balmier than those I fetched me from Persian gardens; apples more golden than those of Hesper, and fragrant as spiced October. Good servant, here's my purse. Get you another master longer-lived.

PETERKIN. No, faith; I'd not outlive the best of masters.

THEOPHILUS. I will recommend you to the Emperor.

PETERKIN. Since you could not recommend him to me.

No, no; that were to go from flowers to frost, and by trying to climb higher, topple over into the ditch.

THEOPHILUS. We must part, Peterkin, for my last day is almost spent, and I would not crush you in my ruin.

PETERKIN. We must not part — not though it were your last penny that was spent. No more, sir, than I would offer to share your bed would I be guilty of sharing your grave, but in the ground as in the palace, I will be at your feet.

THEOPHILUS [*taking his hand*]. Enough! Now, if you will not yet go, listen. [*To Emperor.*] Sire, your captain waits yonder to tell you that the blessed Dorothy has finished her martyrdom and to usher me into her presence.

EMPEROR. By Mahound, this is a poor joke, Theophilus. Am I not Emperor? I think I will take you at your word.

THEOPHILUS. Your Majesty had better, for it is the last you will get from me.

EMPEROR [*clashing sword and shield*]. Thunder and blood!

PETERKIN. That's Jupiter and Mars.

EMPEROR. Fool, does your master want to get his head chopped off?

PETERKIN. I think that's what Your Majesty wants, saving your presence.

EMPEROR. Is your master a Christian, fool?

PETERKIN. No, Your Majesty —

THEOPHILUS. Sire, I am —

PETERKIN. He's of the religion, Majesty, but it's I that am the Christian fool, for I'm not just sure what is the religion. But there is no doubt that what he is, I am. And that pretty boy yonder did not come around the corner for nothing.

EMPEROR. Shall I be spoken to thus? Shall I be so defied? Not by Pluto! Theophilus, if you recanted a thousand times, you should die, and the fool in your company for the more shame.

THEOPHILUS. I have heard that we are all brothers, and in a family there is no ill company. Farewell, sir, I leave you to the tender mercies of your own false gods. Come, brother, we go a-plucking roses.

PETERKIN. In February! To think the fool should make so good an ending alongside of his master! And yet, after all, it is but a foolish ending.

THEOPHILUS. Some folly is wisdom, brother: that we go to prove among the red, red roses of martyrdom.

*[Exeunt Theophilus leading, Emperor striding last.]*

CURTAIN

# IN THE GOOD GREEN WOOD <sup>1</sup>

BY MARJORIE BENTON COOKE

## CHARACTERS

KING RICHARD OF THE LION HEART

ROBIN HOOD, *an outlaw*

LITTLE JOHN

WILL SCARLET

ALAN-A-DALE

FRIAR TUCK

THREE BLACK FRIARS

THE BLIND BEGGAR

THE DEAF BEGGAR

THE DUMB BEGGAR

THE LAME BEGGAR

THE LEAN FRIAR

THE FAT FRIAR

MIDGE THE MILLER

SCENE: *A part of the Forest of Sherwood. Discovered, Robin Hood leaning idly against a tree watching Little John string his bow. Friar Tuck sits with his head on his chest, hands clasped over his stomach, fast asleep. Alan-a-Dale fits a new string to his harp.*

ALAN [*sings lightly*]. Tra-la-la, the bird sings blithely,  
Tra-la-la-la-la!

ROBIN HOOD [*stretching*]. Methinks I would rather roam  
this good green wood in the spring-time than be king  
of all merry England! Is there a place as fair as this

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1906, by The Dramatic Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of The Dramatic Publishing Company, Chicago, the publishers of Marjorie Benton Cooke's plays and monologues, to whom should be addressed correspondence in regard to producing this play.

sweet woodland now, and lives there a king with such an appetite as I?

LITTLE JOHN. The life we lead is the life for me! Both spring and winter have their joys. Thou and I, good master, have had many a good bout at the Blue Boar.

ALAN. Dost remember the night that Friar Tuck must snatch a kiss from the stout hostess, and got a cannikin of ale emptied over his head?

FRIAR TUCK. Who calls Friar Tuck? *[All laugh.]*

ROBIN HOOD. They do say that our good King Richard comes to Nottingham Town this day. We should be off to help the Sheriff give his Majesty fit welcome. What say ye, my merry men?

*[Enter Will Scarlet.]*

How now, Will Scarlet?

WILL SCARLET. My master, there's many a fat friar and a villainous lord abroad on the highway to-day a-riding to Nottingham Town. Shall we set forth and find a guest or two?

ROBIN HOOD. Well said, Will Scarlet! Choose a dozen men and get ye gone. Little John, what say'st thou to a merry adventure? Take thou a friar's gown from our chest of garments, and I will don a beggar's rags. Then let us wander forth and see what doth befall us.

*[Little John rises and stretches.]*

LITTLE JOHN. That suits my mind — let us be off.

ROBIN HOOD. Bring forth such clothes as do befit our needs.

*[Little John and Will Scarlet go out to get clothes.]* Friar Tuck, will'st thou abide our coming?

FRIAR TUCK. Aye, with a right good will. I'll sleep and watch and sing.

*[Enter Little John and Will Scarlet with disguises. Will*



*helps Little John into a Gray Friar's robe. All laugh at effect.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Behold our Little John becomes a goodly friar! Ha-ha! Lend us a hand here.

*[Alan helps Robin into beggar's rags.]*

FRIAR TUCK *[laughing]*. Thy robe, good father, is a trifle scant.

*[He leans over and tries to pull it down to cover Little John's legs.]*

LITTLE JOHN. 'Tis a penance I suffer, good brother, thus to show my legs!

*[He folds his hands and looks down in mock holiness.]*

FRIAR TUCK. Come — come — look not down that way.

Raise thine eyes boldly, or they'll know thee for a cheat.

*[Little John takes staff and leather bottle, and Robin arms himself with a staff.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Take thy men, Will Scarlet, and fare thee forth to find us a guest for to-night's feast. Farewell, Friar Tuck. And thou, good father, may'st thou not have cause to tell thy beads in earnest ere we meet again.

LITTLE JOHN *[laughing]*. Farewell, good beggar. May'st thou not have cause to beg for mercy 'ere we meet again!

*[All laugh. Robin exits R. Little John exits L. Alan, Will Scarlet, and the Friar go out at back. Robin Hood returns and searches ground. Little John returns and stops surprised.]*

ROBIN HOOD. I did forget my pouch!

LITTLE JOHN. And I my rosary!

*[Both laugh, pick the lost articles up, and start to go.]*

LITTLE JOHN. Hark! Some one comes. *[They peer off R.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Two Friars, an I mistake not. I'll leave them to thy tender mercy, father.

*[Robin Hood hides behind tree.]*

*[Enter a Fat Friar and a Lean Friar.]*

LITTLE JOHN. Give ye good den, my brothers.

BOTH FRIARS. Good den.

LITTLE JOHN. I pray ye give me a penny or two to buy me bread at the next inn.

FAT FRIAR. We have no money. Come, let us on.

[*They start to pass him, but Little John stands in front.*]

LITTLE JOHN. Now, for sweet Charity's sake, give me a penny!

LEAN FRIAR [*crossly*]. I tell thee, we have no money.

LITTLE JOHN. In holy truth?

FAT FRIAR. Not a farthing!

LEAN FRIAR. Not a groat!

LITTLE JOHN. Nay, this must not be. Let us kneel here in the road, and pray the good Saint Dunstan to send us money to carry us on our way.

FAT FRIAR. What? Dost tell me, the High Cellarer of Fountain Abbey, to kneel in the road with a beggarly friar?

LITTLE JOHN [*threateningly*]. Get down straightway, or I may forget ye are both in Holy Orders. [*They sink to their knees in alarm.*] Now, brothers, pray. [*They mumble and tell their beads.*] Now, put thy hands in thy pouches and see what the Saint hath sent. [*They try, but bring forth empty hands.*] What, have thy prayers so little value? Let us at it again. "O gracious Saint Dunstan, send ten shillings apiece to these two friars, and any more thou sendest, send to me." Now, let us see what each man hath! [*They try pouches again in vain.*]

LITTLE JOHN. Again? Nay, I'll warrant ye've missed it. Let me look. [*He brings forth bag from Lean Friar's pouch.*] What hast thou missed, good brother? [*He brings bag from Fat Friar's pouch.*] Ah, ha! I feared thou hadst missed the money the good Saint had sent. I only prayed for ten shillings apiece for each of ye; all

over and above that belongs by right to me, so I take it.  
*[He counts out money and gives each ten shillings.]* And now, good den, good brothers, may ye have a pleasant journey henceforth.

*[Friars exchange frightened glances and flee. Robin Hood comes out laughing.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Our Lady, but thou didst serve them well! I almost laughed aloud when thou didst pray.

LITTLE JOHN. Look you — four beggars come this way.  
 'Tis thy turn, Master. I'll abide the outcome.

*[He hides behind the tree. Enter four beggars, one blind, one deaf, one dumb, one lame.]*

DEAF BEGGAR. Methinks I hear voices!

BLIND BEGGAR. I see one of our craft, if I mistake not.

DUMB BEGGAR. Welcome, brother.

*[The Lame man sits down and takes off wooden leg.]*

ROBIN HOOD *[laughs]*. Marry, 'tis seemly for you to be glad, since I bring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, and a lusty leg to the lame.

DUMB BEGGAR. Whence comest thou?

ROBIN HOOD. From Sherwood Forest.

DEAF BEGGAR. Is't true? If Robin Hood caught us in his forest he'd clip our ears! For all the money we carry to Lincoln Town I'd not sleep one night in his forest —

ROBIN HOOD. What money is that, thou dost speak of?

BLIND BEGGAR. Stay — I would not doubt our brother, but he is a stranger. Give us the sign. "Hast ever fibbed a chouse quarrons in the Rome pad for loure in his bung?"

*[They watch Robin closely. He looks from one to another.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Now, out upon ye — ye make sport, pattering such gibberish. *[They all fall upon him, beating at him with staffs. He faces them swinging his stick.]* How now, would you four stout fellows fall on one man? Stand back!

LAME BEGGAR. Thou art a vile spy. Thou dost not know the sign. Down with him, men.

*[Robin strikes at Lame beggar — he rolls over — then he knocks Dumb beggar down. Other two take to heels.]*

ROBIN HOOD. It were a pity to let sound money stay in the pockets of such scurvy knaves.

*[He takes bag from each beggar's pouch. Little John comes out.]*

LITTLE JOHN. Is't heavy, master?

ROBIN HOOD. Marry — so 'tis. But see, they come back for their wounded, let's away. *[They hide. Two beggars come in and carry off the two wounded ones. Robin and Little John sally forth laughing.]* The day begins right merrily. And now — dost thou take the road to Lincoln and I'll go —

LITTLE JOHN *[points]*. Look you what comes. A flock of portly friars — methinks there's sport here.

*[Enter King Richard, dressed as a Black Friar, and three other friars.]*

KING RICHARD. Now, I would give an half a hundred pounds for somewhat to quench my thirst!

*[Robin Hood steps out and stands before the King.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Truly, holy brother, it were an unchristian thing not to give fitting answer to so fair a bargain! We keep an inn hereabouts, and we will not only give thee a draught of wine, but a noble feast to tickle thy taste.

*[He blows a whistle.]*

*[Enter Little John, Alan-a-Dale, Midge the Miller, Will Scarlet. They line up behind Robin Hood.]*

KING RICHARD. How, now? Hast no regard for such holy men as we?

ROBIN HOOD. Not a whit.

KING RICHARD. Out upon thee, thou art a naughty fellow!  
Here is my purse, but lay not hands upon me.

ROBIN HOOD. Art thou the King of England to give orders to me? Here, Little John, see what's within the purse.  
[*He tosses it to him.*] Put back thy cowl, good brother, I fain would see thy face.

KING RICHARD. Nay, for we have taken a vow not to show our faces for four and twenty hours.

ROBIN HOOD. So be it. Here's thy purse. Give it him, Little John. We keep but fifty pounds.

[*King inspects the band.*]

KING RICHARD. By my soul, thou hast a fine lot of yeomen about thee, Robin. Methinks, the King himself would be glad of such a bodyguard.

ROBIN HOOD. I tell thee, brother, there's not a man among us but would pour his blood like water for the King. Ye churchmen understand him not, but we yeomen love him loyally for his brave deeds.

[*Enter Friar Tuck.*]

FRIAR TUCK. Give ye good den, brothers. I am glad to welcome some of my cloth to this naughty place!

ROBIN HOOD. Give us wine, Friar Tuck, not words.

FRIAR TUCK. Tut — tut — words for the spiritual man, my master, then wine for the material man!

[*He goes out to get wine.*]

KING RICHARD. What name does he carry?

ROBIN HOOD. Friar Tuck, and as goodly a man as ever wore a frock.

[*Enter Tuck with flagons and ale. He pours wine for all of them.*]

Stay! I would give ye a pledge. Here's to good King Richard, and may all his enemies be confounded!

[*All cheer and drink.*]

KING RICHARD. Methinks, good fellow, thou hast drunk to thine own confusion.

ROBIN HOOD. Never a whit. For I tell ye, we of Sherwood are more loyal to the King than those of thine order.

KING RICHARD. Perhaps King Richard's welfare is more to me than thou wottest of, good Robin. But come, I've heard that ye were wondrous archers — canst not show us some entertainment?

ROBIN HOOD. With all my heart. Ho, lads, set up a garland at the end of the glade.

*[King sits on rock at L. with Friars about him. Robin and Little John stand at R., other outlaws at C. Will Scarlet goes to hang garland, and Tuck goes for bows and arrows.]*

WILL SCARLET *[calls off stage]*. Master, shall I set it here?

ROBIN HOOD *[calls back]*. Aye — 'tis well. *[Tuck comes with bows which they select from his hand.]* Yon is the mark. Each of you shoot three arrows, and if any fellow misseth, he shall have a buffet of Will Scarlet's fist.

FRIAR TUCK. I warrant thou dost trust thine own arrows, else thou wouldst be more chary of Will's buffets.

ROBIN HOOD. Come, Midge the Miller, let us see thee try. *[Midge steps forward, and aims arrow off stage at L. All lean forward watching eagerly. First arrow strikes. All say — "Ah!" Second arrow strikes — Another "Ah!" Third arrow strikes — "Oh!" of satisfaction.]* Well done, fellow. Now, Little John.

*[Little John steps out. Same business. Third arrow misses. All say — "Oh!" of disappointment, then laugh.]*

WILL SCARLET. Come hither, Little John, I've something I would make thee a present of.

*[Little John stands before Will Scarlet, braces himself and gets a cuff that sends him sprawling. He picks himself up embarrassed and stands in background.]*

FRIAR TUCK. Master — here's thy bow!

*[Offers Robin Hood his bow. All watch breathless as two arrows strike. Third one misses. All roar with laughter.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Out upon it — the shaft was ill-feathered.  
Give me a clean arrow.

WILL SCARLET. Nay, good uncle, thou hadst thy chance.  
Come hither and let me give thee what I owe!

FRIAR TUCK. My blessing on thee, good master! These cuffs of Will Scarlet's are passing sweet and gentle.

ROBIN HOOD. I am King here, and it may not be that a subject should raise hand against the sovereign, but I will yield myself to this holy Friar, and take my punishment from him. I pray thee, brother, take my punishment upon thee.

KING RICHARD. Marry, with all my heart!

ROBIN HOOD. If thou canst make me tumble, I'll give back thy fifty pound.

KING RICHARD *[rising]*. So be it. Make room, good fellows.  
*[He bares his arm. All lean forward smiling. The King gives Robin a cuff and he falls at his feet. All roar with laughter, King joining in. Robin sits up rubbing head.]*

ROBIN HOOD. Will Scarlet, count out the fifty pounds. A murrain seize him and his buffeting! I think I'm deafened for life.

*[Will Scarlet counts out fifty pounds, and offers it to the King who puts it in pouch.]*

KING RICHARD. I thank thee. Robin, if thou shouldst ever want for a match to that box, I'll give it thee for naught.

*[Enter Alan-a-Dale, running, red and excited.]*

ALAN. Oh, my dear master, gather thy band and come with me!

ROBIN HOOD. How now, Alan? What's this?



ALAN. King Richard rides in the forest seeking thee, instead of marching to Nottingham. Hasten, we must be gone at once! Who are these strangers, master?

ROBIN HOOD. They are some gentle guests. Their names I know not, but their acquaintance hath cost me fifty pounds and a deaf ear!

KING RICHARD. Thy name, young sir?

ALAN. Alan-a-Dale, and yours, sir? [*King Richard lifts cowl. All gaze a moment, then fall on their knees.*] Sire!

KING RICHARD. Rise, all of ye, for ye shall suffer no harm through me this day, for 'tis a pity that so merry a time should end in sadness. Robin Hood, art still too deaf to hear me speak?

ROBIN HOOD. Only the deafness of death could make me fail to hear Your Majesty's voice.

KING RICHARD. Now, but for three things, my gentle heart, my love of a stout woodsman, and thy loyalty to me, thine ears might have been closed in that deafness thou hast spoken of. But come — look up. I cannot let thee roam the forest as thou hast done, but I will take thee back with me to London town. Little John, Alan-a-Dale, and Will Scarlet shall also come with me, and the rest of thy band shall be enrolled as royal rangers — and they shall guard the door in Sherwood Forest. And now, good Robin, we'll sample the hospitality of thy inn. We will abide the night, here in the good green wood.

ROBIN HOOD. Your Majesty, we cannot say our thanks to thee in fitting way, for we are surer with the long-bow than with words, but here and now we do pledge ourselves, our swords, and our lives to Your Majesty's service. Do we not, my men?

[*He faces them and they wave their hats crying:*]

ALL OUTLAWS. Aye — aye — we do swear it! Long live King Richard of the Lion Heart!

# THE LION'S WHELP<sup>1</sup>

BY GEORGE ROSS LEIGHTON

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MILO, *the Abbot of the Monastery of Auvergne*

AMIAS, }  
AMBROSE, } *brothers of the Monastery*

TANCRED, *a novice in the Monastery and, unknown to himself, the only son of Richard the Lion-Hearted*

EUDO DE SAINT POL, *Count of Flanders, a noble and warrior of Richard's*

A MAN-AT-ARMS

SCENIC LOCALE: *Auvergne, France*

TIME: *Christmas Eve, 1209 A.D.*

SCENE: *The chamber of the Abbot of the Monastery of Auvergne. Walls and flagging of gray stone. A couple of skins stretched upon the floor. Rude table right center with candle lighted, manuscript, quills, etc. Rough-hewn oaken door with foliated iron hinges leads to the outside court left. Door somewhat similar opens into the corridor right. On the wall, back right, hangs a crucifix, with burning tapers and a prie-dieu before it. Back center, a fireplace with logs smouldering on the hearth. At right angles with the fire is a long settle. In a great chair by the table, reading a manuscript, sits the Abbot Milo. He is old and white-haired, his skin withered and shrunken. He holds the manuscript close to his eyes to assist his failing vision and follows the lines with his*

<sup>1</sup> By courtesy of the author, this play is here published for the first time. No amateur or professional performance is permitted without written authorization obtained in advance from the author's agent, Hanson Hart Webster, 2 Park Street, Boston.

*finger. On the settle by the fire sits Ambrose, one of the brothers, with head bowed and telling his beads. It is Christmas Eve.*

MILO [*spelling with difficulty*]. "Thence moved he southward into Aquitaine towards Saint Bedes. There he was met by" — heh, what the plague — "M-o-n-t," my sight dims. [*He looks toward the fire.*] Brother Ambrose!

AMBROSE [*stirring*]. Yea, father.

MILO. Lend me a little aid with thine eyes. It is dim here in the candlelight and I cannot follow the page.

*[The monk rises and comes over behind the great chair. The Abbot points with his finger and the monk leans over to follow.]*

MILO. Canst thou see? It is a name, I think.

AMBROSE. Yea. Montaubane it is, father. The Sieur de Montaubane.

MILO [*thinking*]. Ah, yes. Of him do I have a recollection. A loutish man he was, with beady eyes. Read on.

AMBROSE [*reading*]. "With the Sieur de Montaubane was the Marquis of Joinville and the king's brother John, called Sansterre . . ."

MILO [*breaking in*]. Toad that he was, loathsome and slimy! His eyes would slink like a hyena's. Heh! Now he sits over England. Nay, read me no more of John, but go on with the manuscript.

*[Ambrose bows and leaves; and the Abbot is left alone. An instant later there is a soft knocking at the corridor door. Milo rouses.]*

MILO. Who is it?

TANCRED [*outside*]. It is I, father, Tancred.

MILO. Come in, boy. Come in by the fire.

*[Tancred, a boy of about seventeen, clothed in the rough garments of the novice, enters. He is a sturdy young fellow,*

*light-haired and with blue eyes. His face is flushed, and he is looking expectantly toward the Abbot.]*

MILO. Come over by the fire, my son. Sit here on the settle.

*[The boy obeys in silence and sits looking into the fire. The Abbot touches one of his hands.]*

MILO. Why, thy hands are cold as Twelfth Night. Where hast thou been?

TANCRED *[getting to his feet and moving over before the fire]*.

I have just returned from the forest. I have been cutting faggots all afternoon with Brother Barnabas. It is cold work — *[suddenly]*. Mayn't I go to my supper, father? I am most hungry.

MILO *[kindly]*. Nay, nay, sit here. Thou shalt sup with me this night.

TANCRED *[delighted]*. That hath a good sound.

MILO. Boy, boy! Think not so much of sustenance.

Meat and drink are passing things.

TANCRED. That be they, father, but they be most marvelous good passing.

MILO *[smiling]*. That was not of Saint Benedict's thinking.

TANCRED. No? *[Sighing]*. How much he missed.

MILO. Tancred!

TANCRED. *Mea culpa, mea culpa!* Forgive me, father.

MILO. Guard thy tongue from forwardness.

*[At this the corridor door opens and Brother Amias enters with a rude wooden platter containing two bowls of porridge, dark bread, and a dusky bottle of wine.]*

TANCRED *[eyes shining]*. Wine!

*[Milo has risen to look over the platter and Tancred does a caper behind his back to the extreme disapproval of Amias.]*

MILO. Move the table, Tancred, before the settle.

*[The boy does so, and then moves the chair before the*

*table so that it faces the settle, and the two may sit opposite each other, before the fire.]*

MILO. It is good. That will do, Brother Amias. [*Amias without a word goes out, leaving the two alone.*] Sit down, boy, let us eat.

TANCRED. A-a-ahh!

MILO [*disapprovingly*]. Silence!

*[The Abbot pours milk from an earthenware jug over the boy's porridge and then on his own. After blessing themselves, they eat, the Abbot slowly, for his teeth are nigh gone and the crust is hard. The boy clatters his spoon in the bowl.]*

MILO. Was it very cold out?

TANCRED. Was it? There were icicles hanging to my ears when I came in.

MILO [*astonished*]. Dost thou say so?

TANCRED [*snickering*]. Yea.

MILO [*wondering*]. Who would have believed it? [*Reaching for the wine and uncorking the bottle*]. Thou must be chilled to the bone. Drink a little of the wine.

TANCRED [*eagerly*]. Yes, yes. [*Drinking quickly.*]

MILO [*sips and holds his glass to the candlelight. His eyes light up*]. Hm-m, pretty good, pretty good.

*[Puts his glass down and looks keenly at the boy. Tancred is busy with his eating.]*

MILO. Why dost thou suppose, Tancred, that I summoned thee here to-night?

TANCRED [*dropping his spoon in his bowl in astonishment, looks up*]. Why, I know not, father, I had not thought. What was it?

MILO. I had thought to tell thee a little of thy kindred.

TANCRED. Kindred, father?

MILO. Aye, concerning thy father and thy mother, and more. Dost thou care to hear?

TANCRED. Care, father? More than anything else.

MILO. God protect thee, my son. Listen now while I speak of thy blood and kin.

[*The boy interested, leans on his elbow on the table watching Father Milo.*]

MILO. Ten winters ago, my son, thou wert brought here, a little child. I came with thee. Many a league had we ridden, guarded by a band of knights.

TANCRED. Knights, father? They who wear the armor, whom we can see passing by the highroad sometimes?

[*Gestures with left arm toward left door.*]

MILO. Yea, they were such. We had come from Lomande. Heh — what a time that was! John Sansterre had barely been crowned. Thy mother, Tancred, was of noble blood. Of one of the great houses of La Marche.

TANCRED [*his eyes shining*]. Then I am of gentlefolk, eh, father? [*Leaning on the table*].

MILO. Verily, thou art. There is no finer blood in Europe than that which flows in thy veins.

TANCRED. God is good. I thank thee, Father Milo. But what of my father?

MILO. Soft, soft. I come to him presently. Thy father was a warrior, and a soldier — a mighty man of valor.

TANCRED [*almost bursting*]. Says't thou so? Was he high enough to be a vassal of the King of France?

MILO. Nay, lad. He was no vassal of the King of France.

TANCRED [*disappointedly*]. So? I had hoped he might have risen to that high.

MILO. Tut, lad. Wait till thou hast heard me out. Now thy father was partially of French blood. He —

[*There is a knocking at the door R.*]

MILO. Come.

[*Amias enters.*]

MILO. How is it with thy sick brother, Theobald?

AMIAS. He fails rapidly, father. The leech does not leave his side.



MILO. I will come at once. Make preparations for the administration of the sacrament. I will follow you on the instant. [*Amias bows, silently, and leaves.*]

MILO. Wait here, my son, for me. I must go to our dying brother. Sit thee by the fire and anon I will return.

TANCRED. I will wait, father. But hasten, I pray thee. I long to hear more.

MILO. For shame, my son. Think of him who even now lies waiting for the summons.

TANCRED [*hanging his head*]. I am full of shame, father. Forgive me for that I did.

MILO [*kindly*]. Not to me, Tancred. Pray the Father for thy guidance, and forget not in thy prayers to think of the soul of our good Theobald.

[*He crosses himself and leaves quietly. The boy stands by the fire, his head bowed. All is still. Then outside the door L., one can hear tramping feet and the clatter of armor. There is a clamoring knock on the door. The boy starts, stands irresolute a moment, and then goes to the door.*]

TANCRED. Comest thou in peace?

VOICE OUTSIDE. Yea, in peace. I would have speech with the father Milo.

[*Tancred opens the door. A gust of air blows in which causes the candles to flicker and the sighing of the winter wind can be heard in the distance. Dimly one can see a figure in armor standing outside in the gloom.*]

TANCRED. Peace be with you. Enter.

[*Count Eudo de Saint Pol in full armor, visor up, enters. He is a tall man, of heavy figure, ruddy and weather-beaten in face, with a deep, resonant voice. He should give the impression of force and great dignity. A fine example of the feudal lord.*]

EUDO. Is the reverend father within?



TANCRED. He has but this moment gone out.

EUDO. Will you seek him out and inform him that the Count de Saint Pol desires audience?

TANCRED. He is at present at the side of one of the brothers who lies dying. I cannot interrupt the last sacrament, but he will return shortly.

EUDO. Enough. I will bide here by the fire until his coming.

*[Eudo draws off his gauntlet with gesture toward the fire. Tancred bows gravely and remains standing while Saint Pol sits upstage on the settle. There is quiet for a moment and then the boy speaks.]*

TANCRED. May I bring wine, my lord? You should be cold after the riding.

EUDO. Thank you, lad. It has been a bitter day, and I am chilled.

*[Tancred goes to the table and pours wine from the bottle opened at the evening meal. He approaches the knight deferentially and presents the wine. Saint Pol takes it and drinks.]*

EUDO. By the Rood of Grace, 'tis good. Meseems it hath a familiar taste.

TANCRED. It is of Beaune, my lord, of the vintage of 1195.

EUDO. Sayest thou so? 1195! No wonder I did recognize it. 'Twas in that year that the reverend father purchased it. I was with him at the time, and with us His Majesty, Richard *[crossing himself]* — God rest his soul.

TANCRED *[interested]*. His Majesty of England?

EUDO. Aye, our Lion-Heart. 'Twas not long after his return from battling for the Sepulchre.

TANCRED. You were with him?

EUDO. That I was. *[Eyes front.]* Dark days they were before Acre. Twice he saved my life in the siege. I see him now on the morning of the first assault, in full armor, astride his horse, his hard blue eyes looking straight toward the rising sun, just before the charge was sounded.

God's Bread, what a man! Yet after the slaughter how kind and gentle. I have seen him kneeling on the ground beside a dying archer, the tears streaming down his bloody face as he promised the bowman that his wife and little chicks in faraway England should not lack bread. [*The Count is staring into the fire.*] I shall never look upon his like again. [*Pause.*] Didst ever see him, lad?

TANCRED. Never, save in fancy.

EUDO. Thou hast missed much. 'Twas after Mount Tabor that he did give to me the golden spurs. Faithful squire had I been to him for six long years. He was not one to give rewards for naught.

TANCRED. I would that I might but once have gazed upon his face. Even here in this lonely monastery have I worshiped the spirit of him who was of the lion heart. To me he has been a god. [*Tancred rises in his excitement, his hands clenched. He strikes himself upon the breast as if to brush away his cowl.*] How can I say that beneath this robe I have a monkish soul [*there is a catch in his voice*] when the heart within me is forever singing a song of chivalry and brave deeds? Even in my sleep can I hear the sounds of trampling horses and the din of battle. Ne'er do I see a bit of cloth fluttering in the wind that it does not seem to be a warrior's pennon, blazoned with the Norman leopards. [*He suddenly thinks to whom he is speaking.*] Pardon, my lord, I did not think. I did not realize what I was saying.

EUDO [*looking at him curiously*]. Thou hast done no wrong, lad. There is naught to forgive.

TANCRED [*inclining his head*]. Thou art gracious, my lord. 'Twas sacrilege for me to speak thus. [*He crosses himself.*] Thou seest, my lord, I am intended for the Church. [*Swallowing hard.*] God knoweth best.

[*Eudo has not taken his eyes off the boy, but examines him closely.*]

EUDO [*muttering*]. Strange, very strange. [*Rises — up R.*]

TANCRED. Did'st speak, my lord?

EUDO. Nay, I was but thinking aloud. [*There is a silence again. Then Eudo speaks.*] Thou art most marvelous like him.

TANCRED. My lord?

EUDO. Stretch out thine arm. [*Tancred does so.*] 'Death, it has the length of his and the height is nigh the same. Who would have thought it?

TANCRED. What meanest thou?

EUDO. Little enough. Yet so strange. But for thy cowl thou might be the Lion-Heart in his boyhood, thy face is so like his. Thou hast the same tawny hair, the same blue eyes.

TANCRED. I, my lord? Thou dost make sport of me.

EUDO. No, by the Face. Thou indeed hast his countenance and form.

[*Eudo suddenly strides to the door opening into the courtyard and flings it open, calling . . .*] Colin, without there. Colin, I say.

A VOICE WITHOUT. My lord?

EUDO. Bring in thy burden. Take care for the stone steps. [*Footfalls outside and a man-at-arms enters, bearing in his arms a little chest.*] Set it here before the hearth. [*The soldier brings it forward and kneels — sets it down with great care, rises and salutes.*] Retire!

[*Without a word the soldier goes out backward, closing the door behind him. Eudo in the meanwhile is busy with the fastenings of the chest. In a moment he has it open. Tancred is gazing at him curiously. Eudo lifts out of the chest an aged tabard of real velvet blazoned with three rampant golden lions.*]

EUDO. Lad [*strikes velvet with his hand*], 'twas this tabard the Richard wore the morning that he rode to the hill

called Montjoy that he might gaze but once upon the city of the Holy Sepulchre, the city that he should never live to take. When he had but reached the foot of the hill, he bade us tarry while he rode alone. Yet, when he had reached the pinnacle of the mount from whence he might look down upon the Holy City, his head was bent, and lo, he raised the lapet of his mantle and covered his face, and so, praying, he rode down the hill to us again.

TANCRED. And never with his eyes saw he the city of the Saints?

EUDO. Never. When he had reached us, he lowered his mantle and rode away to the army saying no word. [*Voice low.*] He never prayed but once after that.

[*There is quiet for a moment. Then Eudo looks at the boy.*]

EUDO. Stand upright, my son. [*Tancred draws himself up stiffly. Eudo with trembling fingers places the tabard upon him. Then he stands off to look. Tancred seems to be in a sort of stupor. Eudo stands dumb in wonder for a moment and then gives a little cry.*] Splendor of God! Art thou a vision or what? Ah, lad, lad, thou takest me back twenty years, back to the golden days of my youth. Thou art the picture of thy hero. What wonder of wonders!

TANCRED [*choking*]. Nay, nay, my lord, take it away. Thou torturest me. How can I stand here thus, wearing the habit of my king? The cloister must claim me. God has called me to a life of prayer. Do not tempt me. Christ strengthen my courage! [*He flings off the robe and sinks breathless on the settle.*] Ah, my lord, the very breath of my body cries for the sword, yet I must not. God ha' mercy! God ha' mercy!

[*Eudo stands bewildered without saying a word. Then the door quietly opens and the Abbot Milo enters. At first he does not perceive his*

*visitor. Then Eudo catches sight of the abbot and advances toward him.]*

EUDO. Father Abbot!

MILO [*starts, for the first time aware of Eudo's presence*].

Hey — Ah — Who art thou?

EUDO [*gravely, his voice booming*]. Knowest thou me not, Father Abbot? Dost forget the days before Acre?

MILO [*in astonishment, peering into his face*]. Eudo de Saint Pol, by the Mass. These many years, these many years.

EUDO [*standing stiffly*]. For God . . .

MILO [*crossing himself*]. The Church . . .

EUDO [*as before*]. And the Holy Sepulchre.

MILO. 'Tis good to gaze once more upon thy face, old friend. It is many a day since we have ridden together with our sovereign. These be lean years. Now John Sansterre sits upon the throne of England.

EUDO. Aye. God's Curse on him!

MILO. Still, good Eudo, we could not expect another Richard. God made a mould divine and broke that mould in casting Richard. Ah, well, no more of this. Sit thou by the fire and we will have words. I have but come from the bedside of one of our good brothers. He is in the hands of God. He cannot live much longer. [*As he crosses himself, he catches sight of Tancred. His anger is aroused.*] Thou, Tancred, sitting in the presence of Count Eudo, thy guest. Rise instantly.

TANCREDE [*rises with his head bowed*]. *Mea culpa, father, mea culpa.*

EUDO. Nay, father, trouble not the boy. I bade him sit for he was weary.

MILO [*grimly*]. Brothers of Saint Benedict, yea e'en novices, do not sit because they are tired. Rather do they stand. By the chastisement of our souls are we saved. [*He sits in his great chair.*] Sit thou yonder,

EUDO. Tell me, why camest thou hither? It hath been these eleven years since I have seen thee.

EUDO. I know it well, oh, father, but war's my trade. One must follow one's calling. I came hither on an errand.

MILO. An errand?

EUDO. Aye, and a great one. Listen, father, while I speak.

MILO. Aye, my son, I listen.

EUDO [*Tancred by fireplace, knee on chair.*] Our Holy Father at the Vatican hath proclaimed a new crusade.

MILO. I had not heard of it.

EUDO. It would have reached you in a few days' time had I not come to you this night. Yea, a crusade hath been proclaimed and blessed by our Pontiff. All Christendom is being called to arms. Father, cast thy mind back to the last crusade [*Tancred turns face about at the word "crusade"*] — Who was the hero? Who battled most bravely for the Sepulchre?

MILO. No need to answer. All men know his name.

EUDO. Aye, verily. But he is gone. God in His grace took him. But his spirit lives, Father Milo, his spirit lives like a thunder-cloud to burst upon the Saracen. The soul of Richard stalks abroad. [*Tancred, hands clenched.*] Hither have I brought the armor he wore before Acre that you may bless it, and that it may be carried at the head of the army of Jerusalem.

[*Tancred on knees examining armor.*]

MILO. Ah, Eudo, they do me honor, more than I deserve [*his eyes flaming*] — I am to bless the breastplate of the warrior of God? 'Tis too much, too much. I am not worthy.

EUDO. Ah, but you are. There are few of us left [*Eudo, rising, crosses to Milo*], good father, that have ridden with Richard in the days of his life. It is but fitting that you should give your blessing to his cause.

MILO. Goest thou to this crusade?



EUDO. Aye.

MILO [*rising.*] Ah, Eudo, would that I might go! Would that I might hear the din of fighting and the crash of arms! I have lived too long, Saint Pol. I was not meant to bless the empty armor of a Lion. Even now can I smell the conflict. [*Sighing.*] But too late. I am too old, Eudo. An old man is worth but little. But Eudo, my friend, would to God I were younger! Not for naught was I called the fighting friar!

TANCRED [*unable to restrain himself.*] Ah, Father Milo, I cannot stand it longer. Release me from my vows. [*Rising from the chest.*] I was not meant for solitude and prayer. [*Clutching at his throat.*] The God of Battles calls me from afar. I see a light, a shining light beckoning, and I must go.

MILO [*turning.*] I had forgotten thou wert there when I spake. My son, may God forgive thee for the words that thou hast spoken. Thou hast offered thy soul to thy Master and He has received it. Thou hast embraced the vows and thou canst not release thyself.

EUDO [*starting forward.*] Father, I know not the lad, yet it moves me to see him thus. Canst thou not let him go?

MILO [*trembling.*] Eudo, I am bound by an oath to guard this youth while I live, bound by an oath to the dying, and I cannot let him go.

EUDO [*placing his hand on the boy's bowed head.*] It is God's will, lad. Take up thy cross and strengthen thy heart. I would have thee go, but I see that thou must tarry here.

[*At this moment the door of the corridor swings open and Brother Amias enters at the door, his eyes staring wide.*]

AMIAS. "Father Milo!" [*He walks haltingly toward Milo.*]

MILO. What is it, my son?



AMIAS<sup>\*</sup>[*in a strange voice*]. Brother Theobald has received the summons.

[*Eudo and Tancred bow their heads. Milo murmurs . . .*]

MILO. Peace be unto his soul. Oh, thou Holy Mother, receive our brother into thy love. *Per patrem, filium et sanctum spiritum.*

AMIAS. Father!

MILO. Aye, my son.

AMIAS. I must speak of our brother's passing.

MILO. Say on.

AMIAS. At the last, just before he died, he came to himself and roused a little. He called Ambrose and myself to him. "Brother Amias," quoth he, "hold me up, I pray thee." So the two of us supported him and he spoke, pointing through the window toward the moonlit trees, "I see a vision, a vision of a youth in armor. 'Tis a battered armor, and over it is a worn red surcoat emblazoned with three golden lions. He is a tall youth, blue-eyed and tawny-haired, like unto the young novice, Tancred. [*He points toward Tancred.*] I hear the voice of God crying, 'Go ye, Tancred, in thy father's armor and battle for the Holy Sepulchre.'" Then he gave a cry and fell back dead.

[*There is an empty silence. Milo stands stupefied.*

*The monk, trembling, goes out the door. Then Eudo steps forward.*]

EUDO. By Calvary, Milo, 'tis the hand of God. Who is the boy?

TANCREDE [*almost in terror*]. Father Milo, tell me, in the name of Jesus, who was my father?

MILO [*his face shining*]. No longer can I refuse. God forgive me. Stand forth, my son. [*The boy does so.*] Great is thy ancestry, lad, and glorious thy blood. Ah, Tancred, wouldst know thy parents? Thou art the son

of the Countess Jeanne of Bearn and of Richard Plantagenet, Count of Anjou and King of England. [*Tancred stands as if transfigured, face up and hands back.*]

God bless thee and keep thee, thou son of Lion-Heart.

EUDO [*dropping on one knee*]. I should have known, I should have known. Ah, son of my master, son of my king, forgive.

[*Tancred gestures to Eudo to rise — then he goes up R. to priedieu and kneels before the crucifix.*]

EUDO. This is the most glorious day of my life, holy father.

MILO [*quietly*]. I have kept mine oath, Count Eudo. I have done my duty to my king. There is little left.

Where is the armor of the Lion?

EUDO. It is here, Father Abbot, here in this chest.

MILO [*as before — Tancred rises on this*]. Fetch it out that I may bless it.

[*Eudo lifts the armor out piece by piece almost reverently. Milo takes the helmet in his hands.*]

MILO [*in an awed voice*]. 'Twas I who unlaced this helm that day at Chaluz when he was wounded to the death, this very helmet.

[*His mood changes. He claps his hands and calls, "Ambrose."*]

[*Ambrose enters.*]

MILO. Gird on him the armor, Ambrose.

AMBROSE. Aye, father.

[*Ambrose and Tancred go out and Milo stands with Eudo before the fire looking at the manuscript. An instant later Tancred reappears.*]

TANCRED. And I am to go to struggle for the Tomb of Our Lord?

MILO. Yea.

TANCRED. Give me the blessing that thou gavest my sire when he rode to battle. [*He kneels before Milo.*]

MILO [*his hands on the boy's head*]. Tancred, son of Richard, son of Henry, son of Goeffrey of Anjou, take thou the cross of thy master. Remember the law of thy house, "Keep Faith," and at last may thou be gathered to thy rest in peace. [*The boy rises and Milo speaks again, his hand still on his shoulder.*] Ah, Tancred, my son, my son. Thou art no longer a boy. From now on thou art a man. Be a man of men, my son. Keep thine heart brave and thine arm strong. Last of all, remember that I love thee, even as did thy father. Forget not the old man of the abbey of Auvergne.

TANCREC [*almost in tears*]. Forget, father? Never. Thou hast been everything to me. All that thou ask, that I shall do.

*[The boy rises slowly. The Abbot is in tears. He turns to Eudo.]*

MILO. Ridest thou to-night?

EUDO. Aye.

MILO. It is well. Go in peace. I cannot keep thee from thine errand.

*[Tancred with the helmet in his hands, comes to him trembling.]*

TANCREC. My father, wilt thou?

*[In silence Milo takes the helmet and puts it on the boy. Then the two, Eudo and Tancred, go toward the door. Milo opens it for them. Tancred goes first. As he goes he turns for a moment.]*

MILO. Farewell, my son. God keep you and give you peace.

TANCREC. Farewell, my father. God willing, I shall come again.

MILO. It is well; *Benedicite*.

*[The boy goes out and Milo and Eudo stand looking at each other in the open doorway.]*

EUDO. For God . . .

MILO. And Church . . .

EUDO. And the Holy Sepulchre.

*[Instinctively they clasp hands. Then without a word Eudo turns and goes out into the night.]*

MILO *[to himself]*. God bless thee, thou little Lion's cub, and bring thee safe home again. *[Then he softly closes the door and comes back and stands looking into the fire. He lifts the manuscript from the table and looks up at the crucifix.]* Oh, Richard, oh, mon roi, I have kept mine oath. I have kept the faith, oh, Lion-Heart. My work is done.

*[Slowly he tears to shreds the manuscript, dropping it reverently into the fire as the curtain falls.]*

CURTAIN

# BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: JOURNEYMAN <sup>1</sup>

By CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

## CHARACTERS

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, *a young printer*

ROGER BURCHARD, *a Quaker*

ELIZABETH BURCHARD, *his wife*

DEBORAH READ

WILLIAM, *an inn boy*

SCENE: *A room in a tavern in Philadelphia.*

TIME: *October, 1723.*

*The room is a private one in the tavern known as The Crooked Billet. It has a neat, cheerful, welcoming aspect. At left a small fire glimmers on the brass and-irons of a well-kept hearth. A brass kettle rests on a hob. On the shelf above the hearth candles are alight.*

*All across the background are a series of small windows curtained in chintz. By these windows a table set for supper, with a white linen cloth and delicately sprigged china. Quaint chairs with spindle legs.*

*Against the right wall a secretary with a shelf full of handsomely-bound books. Near this two chairs with high backs that would screen from view any one sitting in them.*

*There is a door at right background opening into the hall.*

*Another door at left near background, opening into another room.*

<sup>1</sup> From *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. Copyright, 1912, by Henry Holt and Company, 19 West Forty-Fourth Street, New York. Reprinted by arrangement with the publishers, to whom should be addressed correspondence relative to productions of this play.

*At the rise of the curtain Roger Burchard is discovered seated at the table, on which a generous supper lies spread; while Elizabeth, his wife, is bending at the hearth.*

ELIZABETH. The kettle hath not yet boiled for thy second cup, Roger. 'Tis slow, yet I do not worry, for 'tis only twilight, and there is a good hour yet ere we are due at the special meeting of the Friends, and Deborah Read is to come with us. Does thee know, Roger, I sometimes think that for all her saucy ways Mistress Deborah Read is half a Friend at heart. When I do speak she listens to me most attentively.

ROGER. Thee should not *force* belief upon another, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH [*demurely*]. I did not force: I did but talk to her, Roger. Thee knows I am not over eloquent. How should a worldly maid of Philadelphia give ear to me?

[*Crosses to Roger: the kettle lies forgotten.*]

ROGER. How, indeed! Does thee know, Elizabeth, that in so quiet a room as this I can scarce believe that a great city lies about us? 'Tis so still that I can hear the ticking of the clock.

ELIZABETH. For myself, I am glad of a little rest after our journey up from Brookfield to the city. I find myself scarce used to city ways.

ROGER. No more do I, Elizabeth, no more do I. I cannot think this lavish life is seemly. This table, now! Does thee note its profusion? More bread and honey and cheese and chicken pie than we can eat. Sheer waste — unless we can share it. If there was but some poor traveler in this inn whom we might bid to supper, and —

[*A knock on the door leading to hall.*]

ELIZABETH. 'Tis William, the inn boy, with tea cakes.

[*Elizabeth opens the door. William enters with tea*

*cakes on tray. He deposits the plate of cakes on table.]*

ROGER. As I was saying — if there was but some traveler in this inn to share our evening meal — some one with pockets that were well-nigh empty —

ELIZABETH. Perhaps the inn boy knows of such a one. [*To William.*] Does thee not, William? Some one whose purse is not too over-burdened?

WILLIAM [*sturdily*]. Aye, that I do. A lad came here this noon from Boston. A journeyman printer so he says he is, and I'll warrant he has not above four shillings with him. [*To Roger.*] He's come to search for work in Philadelphia, and says he was directed to this tavern by a — by a Quaker, sir.

ELIZABETH. Directed here by a Quaker —! [*To Roger.*] Then, Roger, all the more reason why we should bid him in. What is his name?

WILLIAM. He says his name is Franklin.

ROGER. Then ask friend Franklin if he'll sup with us. Tell him we, too, would hear the news from Boston — that he'll confer a favor if he'll come. And mind, no hint about an empty purse! I fear at first I put the matter clumsily. Give him my later message. That is all.

WILLIAM. I will, sir.

*[Exit, with a flourish, right background.]*

ROGER. I hope he comes.

ELIZABETH [*fondly*]. 'Tis ever like thee, Roger, to have a care for the friendless and forlorn.

WILLIAM [*knocking, opening door from hall, and announcing*]. Benjamin Franklin, Journeyman!

*[Enter Franklin, shabby, travel-stained, and boyishly appealing. Exit William.]*

ROGER [*stepping hospitably forward*]. I bid thee welcome, friend Franklin. I hear thee is from Boston, and come



to search for work in Philadelphia. Will thee not sup here? We are ever anxious for news such as travelers may bring. This is my wife, Elizabeth Burchard, and she will make thee welcome. I mind me of the time when I was once a stranger. Will thee not do us the pleasure to sup with us?

FRANKLIN. I scarcely, sir, know how to thank you for such kindness. All Quakers must be kind, I think, for it was a Quaker who directed me hither.

*[Franklin crosses to fire, Roger taking his hat from him. In brief pantomime behind Franklin's back Roger has indicated that Franklin is to take his place at table, and that he himself will sup no further. During the conversation that follows Elizabeth is taking fresh silver out of a quaint basket that is on the table, Franklin stands at fire, and Roger is seated at right.]*

ELIZABETH. Perhaps my husband can advise thee further where best to look for work upon the morrow.

FRANKLIN. I thank you. I will hear him gladly. He that cannot be counseled cannot be helped.<sup>1</sup>

ROGER. Thee means to seek for work at once, I see.

FRANKLIN. Lost time is never found again,<sup>1</sup> and since time is of all things the most precious, I am loth to lose it.

ROGER. There is a wise head upon thy shoulders, friend. *[Indicates table, and rises.]* Sit thee down, lad. Sit thee down.

ELIZABETH *[hurrying to hearth where kettle stands]*. Alas! I have forgotten the kettle! The tea is not yet ready. *[To Roger.]* Do thee and Benjamin Franklin talk while I prepare it. Show him the volumes lately come from London. Thee knows the print and paper is most pleasing. *[Roger Burchard and Benjamin Franklin sit at right in the high-backed chairs, the volumes upon*

<sup>1</sup> From Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

*their knees. That they are true book-lovers is instantly apparent. They are lost to everything that goes on about them. They sit with their backs towards the door at left, quite screened from the view of any one entering there. There is a pause. Then Deborah Read taps softly at the door at left. Elizabeth turns and opens the door.]*

DEBORAH [*finger on lip*]. S-ssh! Not a word! [*Glances towards the back of Roger's chair.*] I've crept up the stairs on tip-toe!

ELIZABETH. Sweet rogue! Thee startled me to the point of dropping the kettle! Yonder is my husband so deep in a book that the crack o' doom would scarce rouse him. And with him is a young printer whom we have bid to be our guest. Roger and I have finished our evening meal, so perhaps thee will keep our young guest company while I prepare for meeting.

DEBORAH [*holding up warning finger*]. Primp not too much for meeting, fair friend Elizabeth! A grave demeanor goes with Quaker bonnets! [*Laughs.*] Yes, yes, I'll serve your printer, play hostess, or aught else that will please you, and you can call me when 'tis time to leave him. [*Throws off her cloak, and sits by hearth on foot-stool.*] La! such a day! This very morn I saw the strangest sight! I went to the door to get a breath of air, and as I stood there what should I see approaching down the street but a lad with dusty clothes and bulging pockets — nay, wait, Elizabeth! The drollest part is yet to come! I vow he had stuffed one pocket full of *stockings*, and from the other protruded a loaf of bread! And in his hand was a great fat roll, and he was eating it! Gnawing it off, an you please, as if there were no one to see him! Then he looked up, and —

ELIZABETH [*shocked*]. Deborah! Thee did not laugh at him! Thee did not mock at him!

DEBORAH [*wiping tears of mirth from her eyes*]. Mock at him? Oh, lud! I laughed till my sides ached! [*Rises, as she happens to see that Roger Burchard and his guest are rising, yet continues gayly.*] And when he caught sight of my face —

[*Just as Deborah utters these words she and Franklin perceive each other. Deborah is utterly taken aback and quite speechless.*]

ROGER [*seeing nothing amiss*]. Welcome, Deborah Read. I present to thee Benjamin Franklin.

[*Franklin bows. Deborah drops a fluttering curtsy, and then clings to Elizabeth Burchard.*]

DEBORAH [*quaveringly*]. I — I feel somewhat faint, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH [*seeing nothing amiss*]. Then sit at the table, dear Deborah, and a cup of tea will revive thee.

DEBORAH [*protesting*]. No —! No —! I — I will help you to dress.

ELIZABETH. Then who will serve Benjamin Franklin? Thee promised that thee would be hostess, so unless aught is amiss —

DEBORAH [*recovering herself, and suddenly displaying a haughty self-possession*]. Naught is amiss, Elizabeth. I will serve tea if you bid me.

[*Deborah sits at one end of the table, Franklin at the other.*]

ELIZABETH. Thee knows the Friends' special meeting to-night is at the same hour as that of the other churches, so when thee hears the church-bells ringing 'twill be time to prepare, sweet Deborah.

DEBORAH [*with a gleam*]. I'll not forget the time. I promise you that, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. Come, Roger. Thee must wear a fresh neck-cloth.

[*Roger and Elizabeth exeunt left. There is a very long pause.*]

DEBORAH. Will you have tea, Master Franklin?

FRANKLIN. If it pleases you, Mistress Read.

DEBORAH. Cream? Sugar?

FRANKLIN. I thank you.

[*She passes him his cup. There is another long pause.*]

FRANKLIN [*with a great sigh*]. 'Tis a silent place, Philadelphia! [*Another pause.*]

FRANKLIN. Will you have some bread, Mistress?

DEBORAH [*coldly*]. I thank you, no.

FRANKLIN [*bluntly*]. Have you ever pondered, Mistress, that pride that dines on vanity sups on contempt? <sup>1</sup>

DEBORAH [*outraged*]. Master Franklin!

FRANKLIN. I know right well that my poor coat offends you; yet in truth, Mistress Deborah, why should I dress in finer cloth when silks and satins put out the kitchen fire.<sup>1</sup>

DEBORAH. 'Tis not your coat offends me, 'tis —

FRANKLIN. 'Tis that I am neither the son of a gold-laced governor nor a wealthy merchant but only a poor journeyman printer. Then, Mistress, you have yet to learn that he who hath a trade hath an estate, and he who hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor.<sup>1</sup>

DEBORAH [*with spirit*]. There you read me wrong, Master Franklin. I have supped with printers before this.

FRANKLIN. Then 'twas the printer's loaf you mocked this morning, Mistress Deborah; and not the printer. Yet in truth, why should eating in the street displease you, since 'twas a matter of necessity. Ere fancy you consult, consult your purse,<sup>1</sup> and my purse was not over full. But — diligence is the mother of luck, and heaven gives all things to industry.<sup>1</sup>

DEBORAH [*with a toss*]. You speak as if you and Industry were boon companions.

<sup>1</sup> From *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

FRANKLIN. And what better companion could I have? Heaven helps them that help themselves.

DEBORAH [*witheringly*]. 'Tis a fine thing to have high hopes, I doubt not.

FRANKLIN [*blithely*]. Oh, I have more than hopes, Mistress Deborah; for he that lives upon hope will die fasting.<sup>1</sup> To apply one's self right heartily is to do more than hope. Sloth makes all things difficult; but industry all things easy.<sup>1</sup> You are not eating, Mistress Deborah. [*She rises.*] Have my blunt ways offended you? Have I again displeased you?

DEBORAH [*with chilling dignity*]. You could not an you tried, Master Franklin. I was but going to fetch the tea-kettle.

FRANKLIN [*starting up*]. If I can help you —

DEBORAH [*still frostily*]. I thank you, I am in no need of help. A-ah! [*With a cry she drops the kettle.*]

FRANKLIN. You have burned yourself, Mistress Deborah! The poor little hand! [*He tears up his handkerchief.*] Let me bandage it for you! It is sorely blistered!

DEBORAH [*tears in her voice the while she submits her hand to him*]. I can tolerate blisters, Master Franklin. They are far less irksome than — than —

FRANKLIN [*gravely bandaging her hand*]. Than journeymen printers who eat their bread in the street. Perhaps you are right, Mistress Deborah. I trust that the blisters will soon heal; and that the memory of the journeyman printer will not trouble you further.

DEBORAH [*as the church-bells begin to ring without*]. The memory of a chance traveler is easily forgot, Master Franklin.

ELIZABETH [*outside door, L.*]. Come, Deborah, we shall be late! Come quickly, child! [*Deborah snatches up her cloak.*] Bid Benjamin Franklin to wait my husband's

<sup>1</sup> From *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

return. He would talk to him further concerning books. Come, Deborah!

[*Exit Deborah, left, without a glance at Franklin.*]

FRANKLIN [*dropping into chair by secretary, R.*]. Do blisters burn as keen as words, I wonder? "Chance travelers . . . easily forgot!"

[*Sits with bowed head. Deborah stands again in doorway at left, sees him, comes to him swiftly and remorsefully.*]

FRANKLIN [*raises his head; sees her*]. Is it —

DEBORAH. 'Tis naught — naught but Deborah Read come to say to you — to say to you — that she should have remembered that you were a stranger in a city full of strangers. [*Pleadingly.*] Indeed, indeed I did not mean to hurt you! I do not mind your rusty clothes; I do not mock your — your faded hat. I — I have been full of foolish pride. Will you forgive me?

FRANKLIN [*rising; amazed*]. Deborah!

DEBORAH [*hurrying on*]. I had not meant to laugh at you this morning. Will you forgive that, too?

FRANKLIN [*moved*]. Deborah!

DEBORAH. I know I sometimes judge by foolish standards. Will you forgive?

FRANKLIN. With all my heart, my friend. [*They clasp hands on it.*] And will you, Deborah, forgive me my blunt speeches? I knew not how to please you. I meant no harm.

DEBORAH [*earnestly*]. I forgive all.

FRANKLIN. And we are friends for life — for all our lives, Deborah.

ELIZABETH [*speaking somewhat impatiently from beyond the door at left*]. Deborah! Child!

DEBORAH [*prettily*]. Yes! Yes! I'm coming!

[*Hastens out the door with a friendly backward glance at Franklin. He stands for a moment*

*where she has left him. Crosses to secretary, takes book, seats himself, opens it slowly, looking after her. Then sits a-dream in the fading fire-glow. Presently he looks at the book again, and reads the first line upon which his eye chances to fall.]*

FRANKLIN [*reading*]. "Count thyself rich when thou hast found a friend."

THE CURTAIN SLOWLY FALLS



# THE BOSTON TEA PARTY <sup>1</sup>

BY CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

## CHARACTERS

RICHARD STOCKTON

JOHN COREY

NED PEABODY

PHIL AMESBURY

JEFFERSON WINWOOD

FRANK WHARTON

THOMAS RIGBY, *a tavern-keeper*

EGBERT PENROSE } *Young British lieutenants*

SIDNEY MARSH }

SCENE: *The tavern known as The Golden Pheasant.*

PLACE: *Boston.*

TIME: *Six o'clock on a December evening, 1773*

*The tavern-room is low-ceilinged and wainscoted with dark woodwork. There is a door in middle background, and windows on each side of it.*

*At the right, towards foreground, a chimney-place, with smoldering fire. Above is a shelf on which are iron candlesticks and short bits of candles that show economy. Against the right wall a round mahogany table. On it another iron candlestick, which has been lighted. A punch-bowl. Cups. A ladle. Also a brass bowl beneath which a small charcoal flame burns, keeping hot*

<sup>1</sup> From *Patriotic Plays and Pageants*. Copyright, 1912, by Henry Holt and Company, 19 West Forty-Fourth Street, New York. Reprinted by arrangement with the publishers to whom should be addressed correspondence relative to productions of this play.

*the lemonade. Beyond this table a dark wooden chest with a heavy lock. Under the window in left background a similar chest.*

*By the hearth, facing audience, a long seat with a high back and pew-like ends. At the rise of the curtain, Thomas Rigby, the rubicund landlord, is lighting with a taper the candles that stand on the mantelshelf, the buttons on his plum-colored waistcoat twinkling in the gleam. He has only lighted one when the door is pushed open, and there enter two young British lieutenants, mere lads, whose scarlet cloaks, exaggerated lace wrist ruffles, and brilliant gold braiding make a fine showing. But Thomas Rigby shows no look of welcome.*

MARSH. Hey, landlord! Brrrr! It's cold! Give us something to warm us.

PENROSE [*foppishly*]. Aye, and be brisk about it. I do not wish to be served in a loitering fashion.

*[Rigby makes as if to speak; but restrains himself, and, with a look of quiet scorn, serves them hot lemon punch. Penrose is by the fire. Marsh by the window.]*

MARSH. It promises to be a chilly eve after a cloudy morning.

PENROSE [*with a shiver*]. More snow and bitter weather!

MARSH [*looking out the window*]. Nay, not so bitter. The window-panes are clear and unfrosted. The twilight gathers quickly. The streets are gray, and there's scarce a gleam in the darkness of the harbor.

PENROSE [*as Marsh leaves window for fire*]. Not e'en a light in the rigging o' Francis Rotch's ships? The sailors must be supping at the taverns. They're weary now of staying harborbound. There'll be rejoicing when the tax is paid, and the stiff-necked Yankees bring the tea to land.

MARSH. There be some who call themselves patriots, and swear they'll never pay it.

PENROSE [*sipping*]. Not pay it? They'll defy us? Pooh! We could bring them to time with a twist of the wrist did we but wish to! [*Looking with approval at his own apparel.*] A mere handful of men with scarcely any lace for their ruffles, and tarnished buckles for their shoes! *They defy us?* You're jesting! No, no, my dear Sidney! In spite of all their protests and town meetings they'll be glad enough to give in at the end, and to pay the tax right speedily. For, mark you, in spite of all the rumors of defiance that we've heard, the town to-night lies as quiet as a church.

MARSH. Aye, so it does.

PENROSE [*rising*]. Too quiet for my spirits. Let's seek another tavern where there's more revelry than there is here.

MARSH [*draining his glass*]. We'll not find shrewder lemon punch at any. On my way back I'll have another glass.

*[Tosses money at Rigby, who lets it lie where it falls. He shakes a clenched hand after the retreating figures of the two lieutenants, and then goes back to lighting his candles on the mantelshelf. Marsh and Penrose exeunt. After a moment there comes from without the sound of a halting step, the door is opened, and Richard Stockton enters, a lad with the eyes of a dreamer, and the bearing of a doer of deeds. Thomas Rigby, at sound of the entering step, turns, taper in hand.]*

RICHARD [*coming forward*]. 'Tis only I. Go on with the candles, landlord.

RIGBY [*joyfully*]. Only you, Dick Stockton! Zounds! There's none whom I'd sooner see! Quick! Tell me the news! These be stirring days, and here am I tied to this

tavern-room, and afraid to leave it lest those brawling red-coats loot it while I'm gone. To leave a tavern-room empty is to invite disaster — and yet — what patriot should bide indoors on days like these! 'Faith! I'm torn 'twixt necessities! Come! Your news. Sit by the fire and out with it! What's to become of the tea we won't pay taxes on?

RICHARD. Give me breath and I'll tell you! There's news to make your blood boil. I've been at the town meeting in the Old South Church all day. What think you —! The governor at Milton has refused a pass to Francis Rotch, and the tea ships cannot leave the harbor. The British have sworn they'll make us pay the tax or wring our scurvy necks.

RIGBY [*outraged*]. Zounds! There are necks I'd like to have the wringing of! What else, lad, what else?

RICHARD. The Old South Church could not hold half the patriots who wish to talk and listen. Such speeches! Oh, they'd stir your blood if you could hear them!

RIGBY [*eyes agleam*]. 'Tis stirred enough already! Go on, lad, quickly!

RICHARD. Josiah Quincy is presiding at the New Old South. 'Twas he who thought of sending word to the governor. And now the governor has refused, and if there's nothing done we're *beaten* — beaten, Tom Rigby, we who so love freedom!

RIGBY. Tut! Tut! Lad! The night's not done yet. Are they still at the meeting?

RICHARD. Aye, and are like to be for the next hour. 'Tis scarcely six — just candle-lighting time.

RIGBY. You look white, lad. Have you eaten?

RICHARD. Eaten! On such a day as this!

RIGBY. Nonsense, lad. You must keep up your strength. [*Crosses to serving-table where bowl stands.*] Here! If you will not eat, at least you can drink a cup of steaming

lemon punch. No *lads* who come to my tavern get anything stronger — unless, mayhap, a cup of apple juice. Youth is its own best wine. Cider for you. Burgundy for your betters, eh, lad? [*Gives Richard a cup and takes a cup himself.*] Here's to taxless tea! [*Drinks.*]

RICHARD [*joining him in the toast*]. And the confounding of the British! And now, since there are no red-coats about, I may tell you that the Old South Church is not the only place that's to hold a meeting. There's going to be one here.

RIGBY [*surprised*]. Here?

RICHARD. In less than half an hour the lads will meet me.

We call ourselves "The Younger Sons of Freedom."

RIGBY [*somewhat severely*]. All that I have is at your service; yet 'tis only lately that lads have been allowed to rove past curfew time.

RICHARD. Such days as these lads grow to men right quickly. Do you think we waste our time with games and — and snowball forts, Tom Rigby? No! The Younger Sons of Freedom have learned to fight and fence, to run and swim, and to swarm up a ship's ladder if need be. How could any lad be idle these last nineteen days, with fathers and brothers patrolling the wharves day and night to keep the tea from landing; when patriot sentinels are stationed in every belfry; and when all Beacon Hill is topped with tar-barrels ready to blaze out into signals at a moment's notice. I tell you — my very dreams are of defiance! But my deeds — what can a lad do when he goes through life halting? A maimed foot makes a maimed ambition, unless — unless as I would fain believe, the spirit is stronger than the body. It is the *will* that counts.

RIGBY. You're wiser than most lads, Richard. You've a head on your shoulders. I've known you long; but you have never spoken — until to-night. It was your will

that took you through your puny childhood, fatherless, motherless, and made your stern old uncle proud of you. Why now be down-hearted? I've heard you spoken of as a lad of spirit by Dr. Warren, aye, and by Paul Revere.

RICHARD. There's a patriot for you! Would I could do such deeds as he can do. Oh, all I think of is to serve my country — my city and my country!

RIGBY. That's all I think on, too.

RICHARD [*amazed*]. You, Tom Rigby?

RIGBY [*somewhat bitterly*]. Did I seem to you only a waist-coat with buttons? Nay, don't protest! 'Tis how most folks think of me. What have I to do with valor? I'm Tom the landlord, Tom the tapster, Tom the tavern-keeper! How should they guess in me Tom the patriot, Tom the hero-worshiper? And yet there's not one bit of my country's past, not one smallest Indian war but what has meaning for me. What do you think those chests are full of? Trophies!

RICHARD. Trophies!

RIGBY. From all the wars we've had. [*Unlocks chest at right wall, excitedly.*] Look! Tomahawks. Head-dresses. [*Taking things out of chest.*] Feathers. A war-knife. An Indian robe taken in Philip's war.

RICHARD [*delighted: interested*]. In Philip's war.

RIGBY [*with emotion*]. They're more to me than a king's ransom! [*He pauses, looking over contents of chest.*]

RICHARD [*going back to seat by fire, and speaking to himself as he sits by it*]. A king's ransom! What have we to do with kings, who cannot even thwart the tyrant who would rule us! If there was but some way —

[*Sits, lost in thought.*]

RIGBY [*putting trophies back in chest, looking at them fondly, and singing softly for the sheer joy of touching them*]. "Oh, a seaman's life is a jolly life — Trol de rol, de rol!"



Wampum. A woven blanket. A peace-pipe. [Sings.]

I had a goodly old sea-chest,  
'Twas filled with — India dyes.  
Oh, wide the harbor, deep the sea,  
Five fathoms down it lies!  
Five fathoms down it lies!

RICHARD [*half-hearing Tom's voice, and repeating to himself.*]  
"Five fathoms deep it lies —" [*In a suddenly electrified voice.*] Tom! Tom Rigby! I have the way! Your song has given it to me! I have the way!  
[*He has rushed to Rigby.*]

RIGBY [*as sounds of approaching footsteps are heard without.*]  
Hush! Here come the Sons of Freedom! [*Door is flung open. Rigby's professional manner asserts itself.*] Welcome, my lads. Come in! Come in!

WINWOOD [*to Richard*]. Are we on time? What have you planned for us, Dick? My hands and heart are ready for a night's work! [*Offering his portion of cider in loving-cup fashion.*] Some cider?

RICHARD. No. I've supped on revolution!

WINWOOD. Would there were something stirring!

RICHARD [*throughout with growing excitement*]. Are folk still in the Old South Meeting-house?

WINWOOD [*impatiently*]. Aye, still talking of what's to be done. Hancock and Paul Revere are at a coffee-house.

COREY [*as the lads gather about table*]. Come, Dick, you've heard the Governor's reply. How would *you* deal with the taxers?

RICHARD [*at table, center, one foot on table and one on chair*].  
I'd set their tea to brew!

ALL [*amazed*]. What!

RICHARD. In a monstrous teapot!

PEABODY [*jesting*]. As big as Rigby's bowl.

RICHARD [*flaming with excitement*]. Oh, larger! Larger!

AMESBURY [*indicating large cockade*]. Or as Frank Whar-ton's hat.



RICHARD [*inspired*]. Larger by far!

AMESBURY. You mean —

RICHARD [*impassioned*]. I'd take the ocean!

ALL. { The ocean!  
Zounds!  
The harbor!  
Does he mean it?

RICHARD. Overboard — all of it! Listen. The ships are deserted: the sailors on shore drinking at different taverns. If we can go disguised, we can slip to the water front unnoticed. You know how many Indians roam our streets, and no one ever heeds them. We'll all be braves and chieftains.

AMESBURY. But where are our disguises?

RIGBY [*opening his chests, tossing out his treasures, wild with delight*]. Here! Here and here!

RICHARD. Wait. We must have other followers. Followers, said I? *Leaders* — with sagacity. Run, Winwood! Speak to John Hancock, Paul Revere, and Dr. Warren. You know the coffee-house they sup at. Tell them there are disguises for us all. But let no red-coat hear you. Quick! The time is passing.

[*Exit Winwood, on the run.*]

RIGBY [*half-overcome with his emotion*]. Richard!

RICHARD [*helping him and the rest to dress, assisting first one and then another*]. Be quick. Let me help you. Here are feathers. Beads. A knife. Hatchets. A Frenchman's sash-belt. A head-dress.

AMESBURY [*hurriedly fastening on his disguise*]. Where are yours, Dick?

RICHARD. Hush! [*Touches his knee.*] I cannot scale a ladder. Listen! Here's Winwood.

WINWOOD [*bursting in*]. Paul Revere, John Hancock, Dr. Warren — all come with us. I've run ahead to tell you they'll meet us on the way. Give me disguises. [*They*

*clap an Indian robe across his shoulders, and he takes an armful of Indian finery.]* John Hancock says there's a boat and oars at the foot of the wharves, and Paul Revere will lead us. Come quickly, lads!

*[He dashes out the door, with his armful of finery.]*

*The others follow one by one, as their readiness of costume determines.]*

RICHARD *[to himself]*. And Paul Revere will lead them!

RIGBY *[his hand on Richard's shoulder]*. Richard, you've been the brains, and we are but the fingers! We toss the tea: but 'twas your heart that planned it. Will you not serve us — serve us here on land? If any British come, see they don't go a-roving. The fewer on the streets the better. D'ye catch my meaning? And, Richard, one word more. You can see the ships from here. The work we'll do will take but twenty minutes. If we succeed, I'll send you a signal. I'll wave this lantern three times in the darkness.

RICHARD. Bless you, Tom Rigby.

*[Richard is left alone, and goes to seat by fire.]*

RICHARD *[dreaming aloud]*. First they'll go to the wharves . . . stealing quietly through the darkness. Then there'll be the muffled dip of oars . . . and then — Oh, would that I could aid them in this hour! But I am impotent, impotent!

PENROSE *[querulously, as he and Marsh enter]*. This tavern's still deserted. Is there naught alive in this town save the half-dozen Indians we've met a-prowling the streets! Where's the landlord?

RICHARD *[mock-humble]*. He's absent, sir, on business of importance. But he will soon return. If I may serve you — some cider, sir, or steaming lemon punch?

PENROSE *[haughtily]*. Let it be punch, and see that it is steaming.

RICHARD *[busying himself]*. At once, sir.

PENROSE [*languidly*]. Mark how importantly he takes the landlord's place. How old are you, young tapster?

RICHARD. About your own age, sir, I have been thinking.

MARSH [*with a laugh*]. Zounds! You're well answered, Penrose.

RICHARD [*seeing that Penrose starts up angrily*]. Indeed, 'twas truth I meant, sir, and no insult.

MARSH. Sit down. Sit down. He is a simple fellow. [*Taps his forehead.*] He means no wrong. We might have sport with him.

RICHARD [*still mock-humble*]. If I can serve you, sir, to anything?

MARSH. Suppose we call for tea?

RICHARD [*simply*]. We do not serve it.

MARSH [*amazed*]. Oho! Oho! This is a rebel tavern. And so — no tea. You Yankees do not serve it.

RICHARD. No; but we sometimes brew it — with salt water.

MARSH [*more and more amused*]. 'Tis as I said. Simple. Let's try him further. This tea you brew. It must have a new flavor?

RICHARD. Aye, a new flavor. Some will find it bitter. It is a brew that will be long remembered.

MARSH. I doubt not, if 'tis made as you have said.

PENROSE [*yawning impatiently*]. Come! I am weary for adventure! [*Draws his cloak about him. Marsh somewhat reluctantly follows his example.*] Let's see if there be sport about the wharves —

RICHARD [*to himself*]. The wharves —

MARSH [*still reluctant*]. On such a night as this —! Why, but a moment since you swore it was too cold! Besides, at the last tavern that we visited that fool of a Barton took my sword in jest. [*Darkly.*] He thought 'twas a rare bit of nonsense; but 'tis one I'll make him pay for! I'll not go roaming without my sword.

PENROSE [*insisting*]. But I have mine. One sword's enough for both. More than enough for any Yankees we are like to meet. We could give some of them a rare fright, comrade. Come, then, in search of —

RICHARD [*who has utilized the time in which they were talking by silently taking a foil from the nearest chest*]. Back! Do not come any nearer. You see this door is guarded.

[*Stands before it, his mock-humility gone, his voice resounding.*]

MARSH [*angrily*]. What does this mean?

RICHARD [*suavely*]. One of my crack-brained fancies. I wished to keep you, sirs, for twenty minutes.

PENROSE [*insulted*]. Even a crack-brained lout may go too far.

MARSH. Have at him! He's but one —

RICHARD [*clearly and passionately, his voice athrill*]. Behind me are a hundred — a thousand souls — all those who stand for freedom. Although you do not see them, they are there!

PENROSE [*astounded*]. What! Would he challenge us?

MARSH [*scornfully*]. A turn of the wrist and the thing is done. Have at him, Penrose.

[*Penrose and Richard engage. Richard fights coolly, with his back ever to the door. Penrose grows more and more flustered. Marsh holds an iron candelabrum aloft, for the other candles have gutted and the room is shadowy.*]

PENROSE [*fear in his voice*]. The candles — higher. They're getting low. I cannot see —

[*Richard and Penrose engage a second time, and Penrose's foil is flung across the room to left. Marsh is about to crash the candelabrum on Richard's sword, when Richard, with a deft movement, seizes it and hurls it to the floor, where it falls with a dull clatter. Marsh, discomfited,*

*turns to Penrose, who has picked up his fallen sword, and is holding his wrist.]*

PENROSE [*peevishly*]. The lout has turned my wrist, and torn my ruffles.

RICHARD [*who has darted to window, and stood looking out for the space of a second before he turns to them*]. A thousand pardons! [*Bows ironically.*] Go! The play is ended! [*With growing fervor.*] Through the black night I've caught my prompter's signal. I've seen a light — a light that swings in the darkness — a light that swings three times —

PENROSE [*querulously, leaning on Marsh's arm as they go towards door*]. What does he mean? A signal?

RICHARD [*turning on them with passionate triumph*]. A signal that a blow is struck for freedom! A signal that your tea is overboard! A signal that the time will come when *liberty* will be the watchword of our nation!

MARSH. Come! Come! He dreams! [*They go out.*]

RICHARD [*with face upraised in the waning fire-glow*]. May all such dreams come true!

CURTAIN

# THE LITTLE KING <sup>1</sup>

By WITTER BYNNER

## CHARACTERS

JEANNE MARIE

BARELLE, *a stonemason*

THE KING (LOUIS XVII OF FRANCE)

ANTOINE SIMON

ROBERT, *a boy*

TIME: *The morning of October 16, 1793.*

SCENE: *In the Temple at Paris: a room in which is imprisoned Louis XVII, the Boy-King of France, under the tutelage of Antoine Simon and his wife, Jeanne Marie.*

*Behind a large iron-barred door at the back is an ante-room from which one staircase descends to the courtyard and another ascends to a platform on the roof of the Temple. A closed door leads at the left into a bedroom. Near it stands an elaborate bird-cage in which a wooden canary moves when wound up and whistles "The March of the King." In the cage are also some live canaries, one of which has a red ribbon round its neck. A small barred window at the right overlooks the courtyard. Under it are a box of mortar and some squared stones, one or two of which have already been set into the window. Near by is a table, a cupboard of dishes, and on the floor a basket of soiled linen.*

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*At rise of the curtain, Jeanne Marie, with a dish in her hand, stands by a larger table where three people have just finished a light meal. She is a squat woman of fifty with thick features and a blotched face. While she clears the table, she talks with Barelle, apparently a middle-aged stonemason, who is mixing mortar with his trowel near the window.*

JEANNE [*as she carries soiled dishes into the anteroom*].

What? — Block the door and shut out all the light?

BARELLE. The window first, and afterward both doors.

A grating left there for his meals, but not

An aperture for light or hope or mercy.

JEANNE. Ah, but the fools have chosen you to do

The job! Luck's with us, Citizen Barelle.

BARELLE. You mean God's with us. God himself, not they,

Selected me — to be His instrument.

JEANNE. There's damnable divinity in gold.

You be the God. I'll be the instrument.

BARELLE [*removing from the window a cross-shaped iron bar*].

O Father, prove Thy greatness to these people

That have turned coward toward a little boy,

Son of the King they killed! O Lord, reach down

Thy hand to us! For Jesus' sake, Thy Son,

Give me Thy strength to save the Son of France!

JEANNE [*seizing the iron bar*]. Here's holy water for your crucifix.

[*She spits on it and throws it on the floor.*]

BARELLE. God pity you. — By noon I shall be back

And I shall bring the boy. Does the King know?

JEANNE. Leave that to me. You fetch the other King.

And, please, the puppy-dog has learned his change

Of name. Not King, not Louis any more!

Just call him Capet and he'll wag his tail

With quite remarkable intelligence.



BARELLE. How are you going to manage with Michel?

JEANNE. Michel relieves the other guard at noon.

As soon as he's alone he'll signal us.

BARELLE. Your husband —

JEANNE. Leave my husband to your God!

Leave everything to God — except His Image;

Soon as the coin comes round — leave that to me;

And while we're talking — what about the coin?

BARELLE. One payment now. The rest as we agreed.

JEANNE. God in three parts! And one part now! Come pay it!

BARELLE [*taking from inside his blouse a bag of gold, which he hands to her*]. And you at noon pay me my King!  
[*Exit Barelle.*]

JEANNE [*to the bag of gold*]. Sweet God!

[*She kisses it, then hides it in her sewing-basket on the small table. Humming a snatch of the "Marseillaise," she throws open the bedroom door and calls through it with her arms akimbo.*]

Capet, your eyes are red. Go scrub your face.

Make it all red like a washerlady's son.

THE KING [*a boy of nine, his voice heard outside*]. I am a Queen's son!

JEANNE. Times have changed, my dear,

And Marie Antoinette has handkerchiefs

To wash, she cries so much. Her nose now looks

Like any one's and gets as red as mine.

THE KING. It is not red.

JEANNE. Go make yours red, Capet!

For you're to be a washerlady's son

This very day. — Sh-h! Don't you tell Antoine!

[*She hears him on his way upstairs singing a revolutionary chant. She quickly closes the bedroom door and turns toward the anteroom where Antoine Simon enters. He is a big shoemaker of*

*fifty-five, with straight black hair hanging long and a swarthy brutish face. He carries aloft two bottles of brandy.]*

ANTOINE. I've brought two friends with me.

JEANNE [*seizing a corkscrew*]. Off with their heads!

ANTOINE. Let go my friends! I bring 'em here like this  
And you — you murder 'em! You used to be  
A stylish drinker, Jeanne Marie. But now  
You're an old soak.

JEANNE. Only a soak would talk

Like that. I taste my glass the same as ever.  
It's you who booze like a lout and waste a lot  
On Capet, just to make the poor brat drunk.

ANTOINE. You're keen to see him caper round, yourself.  
But you don't pay your share. You get two thirds  
As much as me for staying in this hole  
And you never spend a sou.

*[He sits and changes his boots for slippers.]*

JEANNE [*carrying dishes from table to cupboard*]. The nation takes

Good care of you, husband — also of me:  
Six thousand livres your share, four thousand mine.

ANTOINE. A patriotic cobbler and his wife  
Cooped up like marquises!

JEANNE. You make me sick,

Talking like that about ten thousand livres.  
You don't know what you want, you lucky fool.

ANTOINE. Know what I want? I want to be let off  
From tutoring Capet. But let me off  
They won't. They've got me here. And here I stick  
And rot. It's bad for the brain, that's what it is.  
Capet's much luckier than we are, Jeanne,  
For he has us, he has, for company,  
But we have only him.

*[The King, a handsome, gentle boy, appears at the*

*bedroom door. Antoine hurls his boot at the King.]*

Get out of here!

*[The King looks calmly at them both, then returns into the bedroom. Jeanne Marie closes the door after him.]*

JEANNE *[in a superstitious whisper]*. He looked at me as my boy Raymond did.

He looked at me as my dead Raymond did.

ANTOINE. Forget your Raymond! Capet isn't Raymond.

JEANNE. You're sore because he waked you up last night.

ANTOINE. With his damn prayers! I fixed him good. He'll not

Be trying Trappist tricks on me again.

JEANNE *[angrily]*. Yes, fixed him good and maybe fixed yourself.

Doused him with water, let him lie between  
The icy sheets and shiver all night long!  
What if he's caught his death?

ANTOINE. What did they say

When I asked 'em, the Committee, about Capet,  
Whether they wanted me to poison him?  
They said, "Well, don't you let him grow too much!"  
Wife, dear, what did they mean?

JEANNE. They meant, "Don't add

A cubit to his stature — cut him short,  
But not too short!" They know their business best.  
Why do you suppose they send a mason here?

ANTOINE. Barelle, you mean?

JEANNE. To seal that window up.

ANTOINE. Make bats of us?

JEANNE. No, not of us. Of him!

They're going to block the door and lock him in.

ANTOINE. And lock us out?

JEANNE. We'll feed him through a hole

Cut here and talk to him an hour a day.

ANTOINE. On what?

JEANNE. On Liberty.

ANTOINE. Woman, he'll live

For years.

JEANNE. O, no, my dove, he's delicate.

ANTOINE. But I've a mind to do for him to-day

And end this job.

JEANNE. You're good at jokes on death.

Our Lady Guillotine might yet arrange

A joke on you. And, citizen, I fear

You wouldn't laugh so well without your mouth.

ANTOINE. But I don't see who'd care about a Capet.

JEANNE. Because they had no use for Louis Capet?

Because they say about the Austrian,

"Why does she ask for cake, when there is dust

To eat"? But people have soft hearts. They might  
Forgive the boy his dirty breed, Antoine.

A child's a child, no matter from what stock.

Besides, France has her enemies abroad

Who call the whelp a king. France has her game

To play. And this one Louis — see? — this poor

Thin undecipherable piece may be

A lucky coin. I grasp it all so clearly.

And I tell you, Antoine, clever as you are,

When the Council General sent the Simons here,

They put their trust as a matter of fact — in me.

ANTOINE. You put your trust in your four thousand  
livres

All right, but drink your brandy on my pay,

On the six thousand which they give to me

For being less important than my wife.

JEANNE. A child's head looks ridiculous on a pike.

ANTOINE. No, it looks neat.

JEANNE. Hey, Antoine, listen! Drums.

ANTOINE. Some one they've got to guillotine, I guess.

JEANNE. The roof, the platform! Call if you can see!

ANTOINE. I'll bet you first it's Marie Antoinette.

JEANNE. An end of her? Not on your life, my dear!

If it were women trying her, then yes.

But this Tribunal? Men, Antoine? Not much!

ANTOINE. Justice decides — and Justice is a female!

JEANNE. They'll feast for days upon those dainty eyes

Before the garbage goes. If she's a beauty —

I hope I'm not.

ANTOINE. You're not.

JEANNE. Trust her with men?

She's got you, all of you, just where you're weak —

ANTOINE. Bet me the brandy on it? — the cost of the  
brandy?

JEANNE. Double the cost! It's not the Widow Capet.

ANTOINE [*at the window*]. I'll ask Michel. He'll know.  
He's just come on.

JEANNE. O husband, how I wish the Guillotine

Was near, where we could watch, to cheer us up!

In seven weeks I haven't seen one head.

[*Antoine goes upstairs through the anteroom. Jeanne Marie rapidly takes a piece of soiled linen and wrapping her bag of money tightly so that it shall not jingle, lays the bundle aside on the little table. Then she enters the anteroom and calls to her husband.*]

Who wins, Antoine?

ANTOINE [*outside*]. I do! I win!

JEANNE. The Queen?

ANTOINE [*entering*]. I heard 'em shouting, "Death to  
Madam Veto!"

At noon they'll split her like an angle worm!

Hustle him out. I've news for him.

JEANNE. No, no,

Not yet — he's sick! And when his father croaked  
He wouldn't eat, was like to die himself.

Go easy, Antoine, for he's off his feed.

You don't know what might happen. This'll keep.

You'll have the fun. I'll not sneak in ahead.

ANTOINE. The brandy, open it. No, pay me first!

*[He opens a bottle. She reluctantly pays him, taking the money from her stocking.]*

I tell you what we'll do. We'll make him drink.

And then we'll make him dance, dance to the bells,

The bells that ring when they lift up her head!

That's one on you, old girl! Now fetch the brat,

We'll celebrate.

JEANNE *[opening the door]*. Capet! Aristocrat!

ANTOINE. What are you doing? Eating up those pears

You took from lunch so's not to eat with us?

Come out here! Join your betters!

JEANNE. Careful now!

*[The King enters from the bedroom. He has in his hands two pears, which he lays on a chair. Jeanne Marie intercepts Antoine.]*

Come here, Capet, I want to tell you something:

A caller's coming — Citizen Barelle.

THE KING. You told me that.

ANTOINE. You like him, don't you?

THE KING. No.

ANTOINE. You do, you little liar.

THE KING. No, I don't.

ANTOINE. Why do you lie to me?

THE KING. I do not like him.

JEANNE. Have you forgotten that he brought you these?

You like your birds, you ought to like him too.

THE KING *[after a pause]*. But if I did, they would not let him come.

ANTOINE. Your tutor, Simon, never goes away.

They let him come.

JEANNE. You're fond of him, ain't you?

ANTOINE. Come, answer us! You love me, don't you?

THE KING. Yes.

ANTOINE. You little liar!

THE KING. Why do you ask me then?

JEANNE. D'you like me, Capet?

THE KING. Where's my Mama-Queen?

She isn't walking up there any more.

I listen and I listen. Is she sick?

Where have they taken her?

ANTOINE. Don't use that word!

JEANNE. Don't you say Queen! Your tutor doesn't like it.

THE KING. Where is she gone?

JEANNE. She's sick.

THE KING. I thought she was.

O can't I go to her? Please can't I go

To her?

JEANNE. Not much!

THE KING. Then can't I send her these?

O can't I? Can't I send her my canaries?

JEANNE. You haven't heard that Citizen Barelle

Will bring Robert, the washerwoman's boy,

To stay a little while and play with you?

THE KING. O Master, let me send her my canaries?

ANTOINE. Sit down. We're going to celebrate. Three  
glasses! [*Jeanne Marie brings the glasses.*]

THE KING. I do not care for one.

ANTOINE. Sit down, I say!

Here's to the Guillotine! Pick up your glass.

[*The King draws back.*]

Do you want it down your neck? The Guillotine!

And my good-luck! Come on now.

[*Antoine and Jeanne Marie drink, then he makes  
the King drink.*]



THE KING. What good-luck?

JEANNE [*with a moment of pity*]. It's better luck than you would understand.

ANTOINE. I won a bet, young man. I won that wine.

JEANNE. And it's a happy day in the Republic!

THE KING. If it's a really happy day, I'm glad.

ANTOINE. Then drink to France! — Our Lady Guillotine  
Drinks blood to-day to France!

THE KING. Who is it now?

JEANNE [*preventing Antoine from telling*]. People you know who used to be at Court.

ANTOINE. There's no more Court.

THE KING. O dear, why do they kill

Good people — only good, kind people? Why?

ANTOINE. Dunno. They have a funny way with them.

They'll take me next.

THE KING. They'll never take you, Master.

ANTOINE. Ain't you the little joker! Catch your ball!

Why don't you hold your hands out, blunderhead?

Can't even learn to catch a ball! We'll see

If you can sing. You know! Your favorite!

[*He sings, Jeanne Marie joining him.*]

Madam Veto thought she could  
Make all Paris run with blood;  
But it didn't come off,  
Thanks to a cough —  
(Dance, dance the Carmagnole!)  
Thanks to a cough —  
Of the cannon!

Put spirit in it, Capet. Now! Pipe up!

THE KING. "Madam Veto thought she —" O no, no!

I cannot sing that song.

ANTOINE. Why not?

THE KING. Because

You mean my Mother. And it isn't true.

She hasn't done them any harm. She loves  
Her people, Mother does.

ANTOINE. She loves her wolves,

Her Austrians! Her people aren't the French.

THE KING. Her people are the French. She told me so.

ANTOINE. You going to sing?

THE KING. How can I sing it, Master?

I cannot sing bad songs about my Mother.

ANTOINE. You sang it yesterday.

THE KING. Master, I didn't.

ANTOINE. Didn't he, Jeanne Marie?

JEANNE. Of course he did.

THE KING. I didn't.

ANTOINE. Little fool, you don't know what

You do. Get drunk. Here, get a jag again

And sing! You're jolly when you're drunk.

To France!

THE KING. O no, no, no! — not if I sang that song!

What if my Mother heard me sing that song?

ANTOINE. She's heard you sing it! Sure she has! It's  
done

Her good, shown her how well I keep my word:

"He shall receive a royal education;

We shall instruct him to forget the past

And only to remember he's a child

Of the one and indivisible Republic."

You sing your song. You won't? Then take this drink.

The young wolf shuts his teeth. See, Jeanne Marie,

What savage little teeth! He must be tamed.

Where's there a knife to pry them open with?

We'll cure his pride. Now will you sing that song?

Down on your knees! Learn this —

JEANNE. Let him alone.

ANTOINE. Obedience comes first in Simon's course.

*[He forces the King to the floor.]*

Open your mouth. Drink this. Well, then, try this,  
Try this!

JEANNE. Antoine! Give me that knife!

*[She takes it from him.]*

ANTOINE. Get up.

*[He roughly lifts the motionless King.]*

Open your mouth and say you ask my pardon  
And we'll postpone the music-lesson. What?  
Won't talk?

*[Jeanne Marie turns toward the anteroom, where Barelle enters, followed by Robert, who, looking like the King in height, color, and feature, brings a basket of clean clothes and a bouquet of roses tied with the tricolor. They see Antoine about to strike the King with the cross-shaped iron bar.]*

BARELLE. You dog! Is that good tutelage?

JEANNE. For insolence it is!

ANTOINE. The little snob,

I couldn't make him drink the health of France!

THE KING *[grasping the glass]*. You lie! — To France!

*[As he holds the brandy high and then drinks, the bells ring out.]*

JEANNE. The bells!

ANTOINE. She's dead! She's dead!

The holiday! The Carmagnole! She's dead!

THE KING. What do you say? I'm dizzy. France is dead?

JEANNE. France that was crucified — has come to life!

ANTOINE. The resurrection! Dance, my darling, dance!

*[They start singing the "Marseillaise" and take his hands.]*

THE KING. No! — not to that tune! Wait and I will dance.

*[He breaks away and turns on the catch which sets the toy canary whistling.]*

I'll dance to my tune, mine! — "The March of the King!"

*[Jeanne Marie turns off the catch.]*

BARELLE [*interposing between Antoine's anger and the King*].

Go slowly, Citizen, to cure a King.

The lilies flourished for a thousand years.

Uprooting them takes time.

JEANNE. Well — time takes root.

BARELLE. How are your birds, Capet?

ANTOINE. They sing, but he? —

He has the pip!

BARELLE [*crossing to work at the window*]. I left an officer

Behind me on the stairs whose legs were weak

With too much holiday. He's bound, he says,

"To mourn the dead with Citizen Simon."

JEANNE [*handing Antoine the bottle and glasses*]. Here!

Comfort him! The platform's pleasanter.

[*While Barelle fits a stone into the window, Jeanne Marie sees Antoine out and closes the heavy door after him.*]

THE KING [*politely to Jeanne Marie*]. He doesn't understand about the window.

You said that he was going to mend the window.

JEANNE. That's what he's doing. There were holes in it.

BARELLE. Let's see which one is taller of you boys.

[*They measure back to back.*]

ROBERT. We're just the same.

THE KING. Why, yes, we're just the same.

[*Receiving from Robert the bunch of roses.*]

Thank you, Robert.

ROBERT. I thought you'd like them. Look!

Look underneath the roses — look at this!

THE KING. My flower, my flower!

BARELLE. A lily for the King.

[*The King kisses the lily and hides it again under the roses.*]

THE KING. Sir, you've been kind to me both times you've come.

Last time you brought me my canary birds.  
I have not anything to give to you  
But these two pears which I have saved from lunch.  
And, just because I am so poor, I beg  
That you will please me, sir, by taking one.  
And will you take the other one, Robert!

BARELLE. I thank Your Majesty.

JEANNE. Get up! Don't call

Him that. It isn't done. You're right, they are  
As like as peas. Listen to me, Capet.  
Take off your things. Put on Robert's.

THE KING. What for?

JEANNE [*on guard near the big door*]. You're going to be  
Robert. Obey Barelle,

Do everything he says. For, if you don't,  
They'll kick you, whip you and cut off your head.

BARELLE. You'll come with me?

THE KING. I'll go with you and do

Just what you tell me to. But afterwards  
They'll punish me.

BARELLE. You do not understand.

We are your friends. We come to free you, Sire.

THE KING. My Mother too? — my Mother?

BARELLE. Where you go,

The Queen shall follow you. Be sure of that.

THE KING. Then take me to her! That will make me  
sure.

BARELLE. Robert, your coat!

[*Robert takes off his coat and waits by the bedroom door.*]

THE KING. I think you are my friend.

JEANNE [*showing and patting her bundle*]. He's counted out  
the proof of it in cash.

He's paid me money. Think of it, for you! —  
A little piece of rotten meat like you!

BARELLE [*to Jeanne Marie*]. You are the rotten meat I purchased!

JEANNE. Pooh!

Don't wave your crest at me, old cockatoo!

THE KING. You mean that you have had to pay for me?

ROBERT. Come quick, for we must change our clothes, you know.

THE KING [*to Robert, in the doorway*]. Mother will look at me that funny way

And not know which to do, to laugh or cry,

And not do either — but just look at me.

Doesn't your mother look at you like that?

ROBERT. Come, little King, and change our clothes.

THE KING. Mine does.

[*He follows Robert into the bedroom.*]

BARELLE. You'll watch the door?

JEANNE [*opening the big door a crack*]. The platform-stairway creaks.

I always hear him coming.

BARELLE [*looking through the window*]. What? — Two guards?

JEANNE. We'll have to wait till Michel's there alone,  
Before you start.

[*She sits and sews listening by the big door.*]

BARELLE [*setting another stone in place, watching*]. I wish that you had told Antoine.

JEANNE. I'm no such fool. I know Antoine.

He would have shilly-shallied half-a-year.

Antoine's a coward. If I do the thing,

Saving him all the pains and half the cash,

He'll thank me when it's done. I know Antoine.

BARELLE. He may come down.

JEANNE. Then let me manage him,

Bottle him up again and think for him

And act for him — and put a sum away  
With which to make him love me by-and-by.

BARELLE. How little you have learned from our mistake!

You care for him by caring for his money  
As we took care of you by keeping yours. —  
There would have been no need of blood and tears,  
If only my poor friends had counted well  
And learned the deadly peril of too much  
And dared to be contented with enough.

JEANNE. Enough is not enough and never will be.

I tell you, Citizen, there's no such thing  
As coin enough. Look at the two of us! —  
You've had too much and you philosophize.  
I've had too little and I kick up hell.  
But those who have enough — lie in their graves.  
Too much, too little — life! Enough — the end.

[*The boys enter, each in the other's clothes. The King has Robert's liberty cap in his hand.*]

THE KING. I have on everything. But not the cap!

JEANNE. Put that on, too. No matter where you go,  
You'll never wear a crown in France again.

Put that on too, my darling Citizen.

[*The King still holds it in his hand.*]

BARELLE. Run back again, if any one should come,  
And change the jackets — that would do.

JEANNE. And then

Come out again like you'd been playing ball.  
Here, Capet, take it, have it in your pocket.  
When Michel's by himself, Barelle, don't wait  
To talk. Just go. See, Capet, there's your load.  
I've lightened it, — so's not to strain your wings.

[*She sits and sews again by the big door. The King tries the weight of the basket, then lays it down and stands watching Robert. Presently he takes Robert by the hand and leads him to the cage of canaries.*]



THE KING [*softly*]. I like the one you gave me best of all.

My toy canary sings "The March of the King"

And the one you gave me tries to copy him.

[*They sit on the floor by the cage.*]

I've tied a little ribbon on his neck

To tell him by. — I think he knows me, Robert.

He lets me take him out of the cage and talk

To him. And he turns his head and looks. And once

He sang to me sitting right on my finger.

O how I wish my Mama-Queen could see him!

They wouldn't let me send him up to her.

She's sick and ought to have all sorts of things

To comfort her. — Perhaps they'll let me send

My flowers to her. Wouldn't you like to have me?

To comfort her, Robert, instead of me,

Because she's sick, you know.

ROBERT. Yes, little King.

THE KING. I do not like to have you call me King.

They might not let you play with me again. . . .

And then besides it means my Father's dead.

ROBERT. The King is dead — long live the little King!

THE KING. The night he left he took me on his knee

And held my hand and made me swear, Robert,

That I'd forgive his people everything

And not be harsh with them when I grow up.

And don't you think that that was like Our Saviour?

Next day my Mother helped me pray for him;

But when I tried to think of the good God,

I couldn't think of any one but Papa.

Why did they kill him, Robert?

ROBERT. Mother says

Because their hearts are bronze.

THE KING. I told my Father,

The day I lost Moufflet, my dog, the day

We came to the Temple and the men stuck out

Their tongues and knocked the statue down and called  
 My Mother names, I told my Father then  
 How bad they were. But he said, "No, they weren't."  
 He said that they would understand him some day  
 And find that we were just like them and ask -  
 Our pardon for the way they treated us.  
 You ought to have seen how Mama looked at him!  
 And then she kissed him. Then she kissed me, too  
 And cried, Robert, because I think she knew  
 Better than Papa what was happening.  
 There's nobody so wonderful as Mama.  
 Why do they call her names and sing bad songs  
 About her, when she's good? My Mother's good.  
 She doesn't hate the people.

JEANNE. Shut your mouth,

Capet, and pay attention! Watch Barelle!

BARELLE. He will not go, the man will never go! —

Hast Thou forgotten us?

JEANNE. Don't drag in God.

Just wait and watch and, when the time comes, act.

You'll learn some day there isn't any God.

[*They all wait a moment or two, silent.*]

THE KING [*whispering, close to Robert*]. When I was little,  
 Mama had her hair

Away up high with a hundred waves in it.

And on the waves were tiny ships, Robert!

O it was wonderful! She waked me up

To let me see it. — And I had a sword.

JEANNE [*jumping to her feet*]. He's coming! Quick, the  
 both of you, get in there!

[*The boys run into the bedroom. Jeanne Marie  
 shuts them in, then sits again and sews. Barelle  
 works at the window.*]

ANTOINE [*entering*]. We want another bottle of that  
 brandy.

JEANNE. Here, take it. Drink it up. To hell with Queens!

ANTOINE. What's the son of the she-wolf doing, hey?

[*To Barelle.*] I'm not supposed to take my eye off him,

You know. Even asleep, one eye must be

Propped up and watching him. A pretty job!

Where is he?

JEANNE. Here's your bottle.

ANTOINE [*brushing her aside and opening the door of the bedroom*]. Come on out

Of there!

[*Stopping short, then turning savagely.*]

What's this, Barelle?

BARELLE. What, Citizen?

ANTOINE. They're changing coats! — Barelle, what game is this?

JEANNE. If brandy makes a muddle in your brain —

ANTOINE. Come out here, you two!

[*The King enters, his coat in his hand.*]

Both of you!

[*Robert follows, cap on, but carrying his coat.*]

By God! —

What is this game you're playing?

ROBERT. Citizen —

THE KING. We're playing ball.

ANTOINE. Show me the ball.

THE KING [*finding it in the pocket of his coat*]. It's here.

ANTOINE [*knocking it out of the King's hand*]. Ball in a room that hasn't any light!

What were you changing clothes for? — tell me that!

THE KING. We changed our jackets. He didn't want to, Master.

I made him play a game of masquerade.

ANTOINE. The hell you did!

[*He seizes the King by the throat.*]

BARELLE. Let him alone! Hands off!

ANTOINE. Not hands off! Heads off! And yours first,  
Barelle!

JEANNE. Yours second, Antoine!

ANTOINE. Hold your dirty lip!

You're in on it!

JEANNE. You lose your head like this

To-day, you'll lose it good to-morrow. Fool!

What do you mean to do?

ANTOINE. Accuse Barelle.

JEANNE. And me?

ANTOINE. And you — and get ten thousand livres

For taking care of Capet by myself!

JEANNE. Try it and see! You send me to the scaffold,

I'll just turn round and take you with me, dear.

You broke the rules, left Capet with Barelle

And kept the officer outside. Why that? —

The reason was a hundred thousand livres!

ANTOINE. What's this? What hundred thousand?

JEANNE [*lifting her bundle from the table and letting it drop  
back clinking*]. Use your ears.

BARELLE. I've sixty thousand here in Paris — yours!

This ring! The Prince of Condé's. Take him this,

He'll pay the rest. Now, sir! your life is more

To you than mine to me. I've got you there.

But you can save yours, mine — and earn, besides,

Another hundred thousand livres.

JEANNE. That is —

Besides my hundred thousand?

BARELLE. Yes.

JEANNE. Good God!

BARELLE. Nobody ever comes who knows the King.

JEANNE. And I'll fall sick and we can get away.

BARELLE. With all the cash you need for all your lives.

JEANNE. Antoine, that means as much as ten whole years

Of prison and the brat. Go on upstairs!

ANTOINE. You should have let me in on this before.

JEANNE. Shut up with your "before"! It's "now."  
Go on!

That's all you've got to do. Go on upstairs!

ANTOINE. Well, I don't know. I guess I'd better do it.

JEANNE. Here! You're forgetting what you came to fetch.  
[*She hands him the second bottle of brandy.*]

ANTOINE [*brandishing it at Barelle*]. I'd like to smash your head, you Royalist!

BARELLE. God knows, my hand would like —

JEANNE. Quit quarreling.

I'll see if Michel's there alone. — He is!

Go! Go!

BARELLE. Give me your jacket! Quick, Robert!

Come! and be careful, O be careful, Sire!

THE KING [*as they put him into Robert's coat*]. My little birds, good-bye. Good-bye, Robert.

My Mother-Queen will bless you when I tell her. —

O shall I see green trees again and sky

Spread out? — O think of it — the sky spread out!

ROBERT. And lots of birds!

BARELLE. Good-bye, Robert.

ROBERT. Good-bye.

BARELLE. You are a brave and darling boy, Robert.

ROBERT. Good-bye, good-bye.

[*Barelle kisses him, then turns to the King.*]

BARELLE. Be quiet now and follow.

Be careful.

THE KING. I'll be careful. I know how.

ROBERT. Good-bye.

ANTOINE. O shut your mouth!

[*With a sudden blow he knocks Robert to the floor.*]

THE KING [*standing stock still*]. I cannot go.

I had not thought of that. — I cannot go.

You are too little.

JEANNE. I'll be here. I'll take

His part.

THE KING. You can't, you can't, when Master — No!

ANTOINE. Go while the going's good. You're wasting time. [*Antoine lurches out and is heard calling.*]

I've found the brandy, Friend. She tried to hide it.

THE KING. O no, Robert! the people over there,  
If they should find me gone, would punish you  
And maybe kill you.

ROBERT [*rising*]. But they won't find out.

I'll turn my head away and I won't talk  
To them.

THE KING. He'll make you talk. He'll make you sing.

And when he has you here alone, Robert —!

I had not thought of that. I cannot go.

BARELLE. They'll soon find out who Robert is —

JEANNE. What's this?

BARELLE. They'll think that he was used against his will,

Without his knowing — and they'll let him go.

THE KING. Once you are here, they never let you go.

O, no, Robert, give me my coat, take yours!

[*He slips off Robert's coat.*]

JEANNE. You little chump, keep on that coat! Behave

Yourself! You're stubborn as your mother.

THE KING. Am I?

ROBERT. Please, little King, please, please!

BARELLE. Your Majesty!

THE KING [*resisting Barelle's attempts to put the coat back on him*]. I will not go. You cannot make me go.

Robert could never stand it as I can.

A King can stand — O more than any one!

JEANNE. Here, hold him, Citizen. Bring him your cap,

Robert. Come now, Capet, behave yourself!

THE KING [*still resisting the coat, and throwing the cap down*].

And then, besides, I've thought of something else.

You might save me and not my Mother-Queen.  
She might be left here all alone upstairs.

JEANNE. She's not upstairs, you little whining fool.

They should have killed you, too, and saved us trouble,  
You with your mother, the whelp with the she-wolf!

BARELLE. O shame!

THE KING. My Mother-Queen?

JEANNE. To-day at noon.

You heard the bells, Capet, and drank her health!

BARELLE. Great God!

ROBERT [*taking the other boy's hand*]. Poor little King!

THE KING. It is not true.

You wish to make me go. It is not true.

If it were true, you would have told me then.

I will not go and leave my Mother-Queen.

I will not go.

JEANNE. Tell him it's true and get

Him out of here. We haven't time to fool

Away like this.

BARELLE [*tenderly, gravely*]. Your Majesty, it's true.

THE KING. My Mama-Queen?

BARELLE. Is with your father, Sire.

She died to-day, as brave as she had lived.

They would not let her say good-bye to you.

ROBERT. Poor little King!

THE KING [*with a sob*]. She isn't dead! no, no,

She isn't dead. My Mama isn't dead.

BARELLE. Be brave, Your Majesty, as she was brave.

A man on horseback told me what she said.

She said: "I was a Queen and you dethroned me.

I was a wife and you have killed my husband.

I was a mother and you tear my children

Away from me. Only my blood is left.

Make haste to shed it. And be satisfied."

THE KING. O she was brave, my Mother, wasn't she!

I'm going to be like Mother.



ROBERT. Little King!

BARELLE. Then, don't you see, you owe it to your kingdom  
And to her memory to come with me?  
That will be brave, Your Majesty.

JEANNE. Go on,

Flatter him up! Perhaps he'll take to that.

I never saw such people as these Capets.

BARELLE. And you shall have your sword again and come  
Some day to punish murderers.

THE KING. O sir,

I promised both my Father and my Mother

Never to hurt the people. But I'm not

Afraid of them. My Father said to me

He could not run away from them and be

A coward. That was why we all came back.

And I should be ashamed to run away

And not be like my Father and my Mother.

JEANNE. Shut up his talk! Get busy while there's time!  
Take him!

[*Barelle and Jeanne Marie try again to force  
Robert's jacket on the King, who struggles against  
them.*]

THE KING. No, you shall not.

BARELLE [*passionately*]. Your Majesty!

[*They lead him into the anteroom, the King con-  
testing every inch of the way.*]

BARELLE. For God's sake!

JEANNE. Little fool!

THE KING. I will not go.

BARELLE. If you betray us, it will be the end.

THE KING. O won't you please obey me? Won't you please?—  
[*He breaks away. Barelle follows and lays hold of  
him again. But, with a sudden royal gesture, he  
checks Barelle in the centre of the room.*]

I am the King of France. Obey me, sir,  
And take your hands away.

BARELLE. God's will be done.

JEANNE [*trying to pass Barelle*]. God's nothing! It's the antic of a child!

[*Barelle holds Jeanne Marie back while the King helps Robert into the washerboy's coat.*]

THE KING. But O be sure, be sure you come again!

The Simons will not dare to tell on you,

For I should tell on them. Take all the clothes!

[*Picking up Jeanne Marie's bundle from the table.*]

Take these as well, Robert. And look inside

And you will find a keepsake there from me.

JEANNE. Not on your life!

THE KING. You wish me then to tell?

[*Jeanne Marie stands back glowering while he gives Robert the bundle. Then he takes the lily from his bouquet and hands it to Barelle.*]

This lily is much better than the pear.

BARELLE. I ask you, Sire, to let her keep the money.

She would be kinder.

THE KING. Take them all, Robert.

[*Barelle bows and hides the lily in his breast.*]

JEANNE. You little cur — you devil out of hell!

[*Hearing the stairs creak.*]

The officer!

[*Barelle crosses to the window and seals the next to the last opening.*]

ANTOINE [*entering, at the big door, heavy with brandy, his finger on his lips*]. He's on his way downstairs.

BARELLE. It does not matter now. My work is done.

ANTOINE [*looking closely at Robert*]. Your work is done, you say? What do you mean?

BARELLE. All but one stone.

ANTOINE. One stone?

THE KING. Good-bye, my friends.

[*Barelle kneels and kisses the King's hand. The*

*King will not let Robert kneel, but puts an arm about him and kisses him on the lips. Robert goes out with the basket at the big door.]*

BARELLE. Surely you cannot punish him for this!

What has he done but shown that tyranny  
May go by any name and wear red caps —  
While loving comradeship may dwell in kings! —  
Father, forget not he's a little boy!

*[Jeanne Marie hurries Barelle out and closes the door after him.]*

JEANNE. He wouldn't go.

ANTOINE. You rotten little snake!

JEANNE. He gave the money back. He said he'd tell.

THE KING. You cannot buy and sell the King of France.

ANTOINE. But we can make him pay!

*[He goes to the cage of canaries and starts to bring a chair down over it.]*

THE KING *[in the way]*. What are you doing?

ANTOINE. I'm smashing up your royal bird that pipes  
"The March of the King."

THE KING. But not the other birds!

O not the one —!

ANTOINE. Which one?

THE KING. — that sings to us!

The little one! The ribbon's on his neck!

ANTOINE. So that's your toy! — your kingdom in a cage!  
And orders, marks! We'll see!

THE KING. The ribbon's red! —

He's my republican canary, Master!

ANTOINE. Favorite of the King, come out here, you!

*[He thrusts his hand into the cage and takes out the bird.]*

THE KING. O give him, give him to me!

ANTOINE. There he is.

*[He wrings the bird's neck and throws its dead body on the floor.]*

THE KING [*kneeling and taking the bird up tenderly*]. O  
listen to me, please, dear Heavenly Father!

JEANNE. Don't mention God again! — There is no God.

THE KING. — Help me to be as brave as Mother was.

ANTOINE. Get up. Give that to me. Here, Jeanne  
Marie,

[*Taking the bird from the King, he tosses it to her.*]

Cook it for supper.

[*He jerks the King to his feet and points to the red  
cap on the floor.*]

Now pick up that cap!

JEANNE. And put it on again!

[*The King faces them, not moving.*]

ANTOINE. You dirty pup!

JEANNE. You put that on! — or else we'll punish you  
Worse than you've ever dreamed. The window's sealed,  
Capet. And now we'll seal this door, and this,  
And cut a little hole here in the middle,  
And then hand in your food to you and leave you.  
Alone in the dark, all day, all night, forever.  
You've heard the rats here in the walls? They'll all  
Come out, when you can't see them, and they'll eat  
Your food. And then they'll eat your fingers, Capet.  
And bugs and worms and snakes will come and wait  
For you to go to sleep. — Pick up that cap.

ANTOINE. Pick up that cap.

[*The King moves toward it and quietly stands on it,  
facing them. Antoine crosses and sets the last  
stone in the window, darkening the stage so that  
only shadows are seen.*]

JEANNE [*pointing, trying to laugh*]. Behold the little King!  
[*Then they open the big door and close it behind  
them, and leave him standing in the darkness.*]















